

# STUDENT SAFETY REPORT 2014

Preventing Liabilities and  
Improving School Climate



## Foreword:

The results of Awareity's 2014 Student Safety Survey are out. With nearly 6500 survey responses from K-12 students across 14 states and Canada, the data reveals both dangerous gaps in schools and painful challenges facing youth today.

This 2014 report highlights the most critical data and outlines the **top 6 steps** every school administrator should be taking to prevent mounting liabilities.

According to 2014's survey results, students clearly provide valuable insight into the numerous challenges schools are facing and help define key strategies to improving school climate immediately and ongoing.

## Key Findings

### Student-Related Liabilities

#### What are students talking about/hearing other students talk about?

- 39% drugs/alcohol
- 35% cutting/self-harm
- 32% threatening/hurting others
- 27% suicide
- 23% sexting

**18%** of students are aware of a student who has brought a **weapon** into school

**34%** of students are aware of a student who has talked about or contemplated **suicide**

**34%** of students are aware of students who have brought **drugs and/or alcohol** into school

**9%** of students have been offered **drugs and/or alcohol** at school

#### How do these concerns affect school climate?

Students' perceptions of how they are being treated and how school staff is responding can have a significant and long-lasting effect on their ability to learn and the climate in your school.

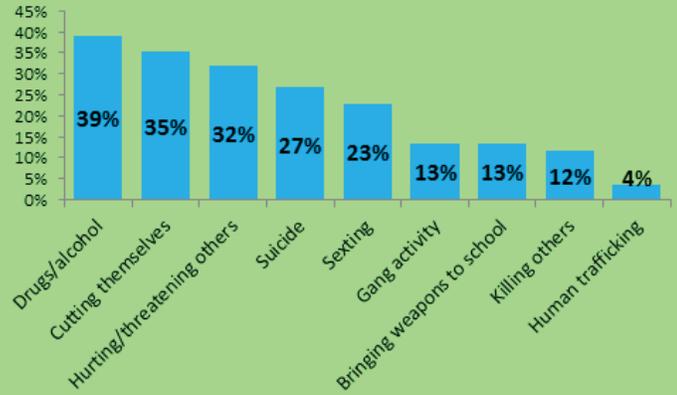
## Liabilities, Frustrations and Solutions

**Students know things school administrators need to know!** Students talk with classmates and share information on social media regarding situations adults are not privy to. If school administrators do not know, it is impossible to be a hero for your students and impossible to proactively prevent embarrassing, expensive and potentially tragic incidents and liabilities. According to student survey results, the risks do exist:

**34% of students are aware of someone who may pose a risk to other students and their school.** And only 1 out of 4 students feel their school is taking steps to intervene with this individual's behavior!

**"But, if we know, are we now more liable?" No, not knowing is actually making your school more liable than knowing.** If students know, school administrators "reasonably should know" and federal guidelines from the OCR and DOJ have been sent to every school making it clear school administrators are required to proactively intervene and address student issues. If risks are not thoroughly investigated and behaviors assessed, and there is no intervention and a preventable tragedy occurs...the media, federal investigators, attorneys and others will find out. Based on numerous examples, school administration and board members will face embarrassing headlines, significant reputational damages, potential charges of negligence and very expensive lawsuits.

#### What are students talking about or listening to other students talk about?



**34%** of students are aware of someone who may pose a risk to other students and school.

**Only 1/4 of students feel their school is taking steps to intervene on this individual's behavior!**

- **16%** of students reported missing school at least once because they feel unsafe, uncomfortable or nervous at school or on their way to/from school
- **12%** avoid or have quit school activities
- **8%** feel their grades have declined
- **18%** have trouble concentrating in class

## Key Findings

### Bullying-Related Liabilities

#### Bullying Continues to Have Significant Impact

**79%** of students have been impacted by bullying

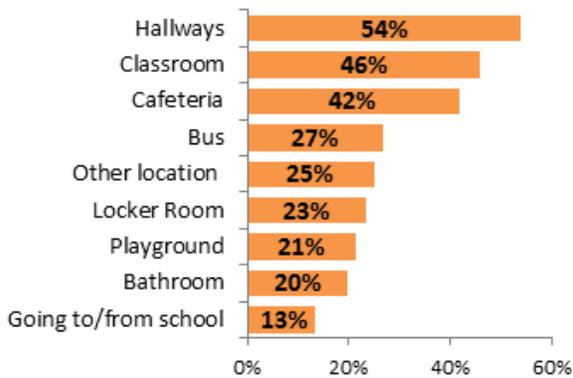
**23%** of students are bullied at least once a week.

**49%** witness bullying of other students at least once a week.

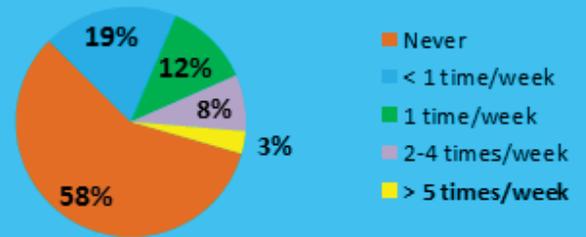
#### Where is bullying occurring? In plain sight!

54% of bullying occurs in hallways,  
46% in classroom, 42% in cafeteria

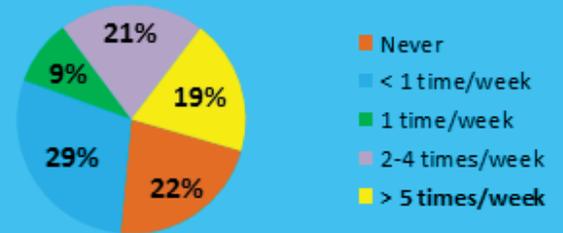
#### Where is bullying occurring?



#### During this school year, how often have you been bullied at school?



#### During this school year, how often have you seen someone else being bullied at school?



Does your school have an anti-bullying program?

16% say yes, 50% don't know!

80% of students know their school's anti-bullying, harassment and intimidation policies

74% of students would like their school to provide additional information and programs on bullying and student safety

## Liabilities, Frustrations and Solutions

**Even though schools have invested significant time and resources, and thousands of dollars on numerous bullying prevention programs and student assemblies, and created anti-bullying policies; and even though state lawmakers have created more laws, bullying is still widespread and impacting students every day.**

Student responses validate school administrator frustrations, 80% of students say they understand their school's anti-bullying policies, yet 79% are still impacted by bullying. Educating students on what bullying is and how it affects other students is critical.

Improving awareness and reporting (both students and staff) can help reduce the bullying occurring in plain sight! Hallway and classroom bullying are problems teachers often feel they are correcting when they see it, but they may not be aware of bigger problems brewing outside of class. It is important for teachers to report student safety incidents and concerning behaviors so school administrators can connect the dots.

With the majority of bullying occurring in plain sight school locations, additional and improved monitoring is clearly needed and easy to address. **Teachers, bus drivers, coaches, lunch room monitors, nurses, counselors and others (as well as students and parents) should be trained on how to identify and report all concerning behaviors.** When all incidents are reported, all related reports can be connected and investigated to ensure bullies and targets are monitored effectively and proactively prevent additional escalations.

# Key Findings

## Online Behavior Liabilities

### 46% of students have been impacted by Cyberbullying

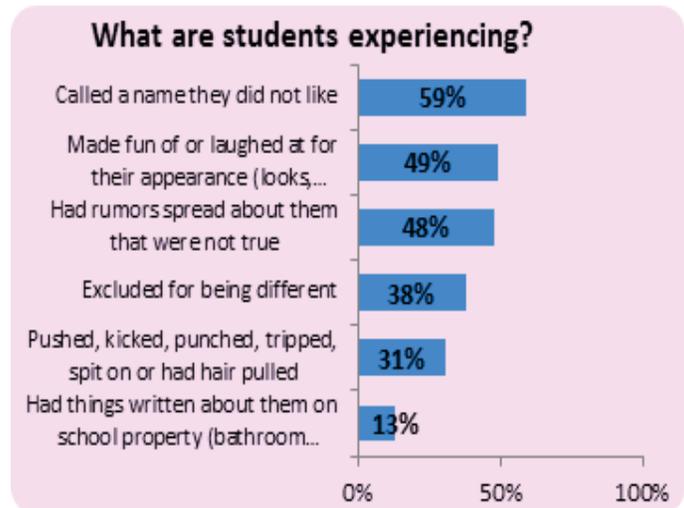
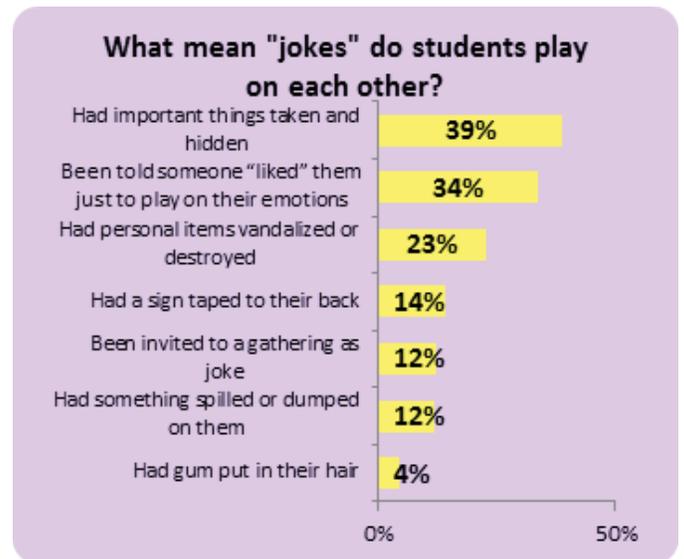
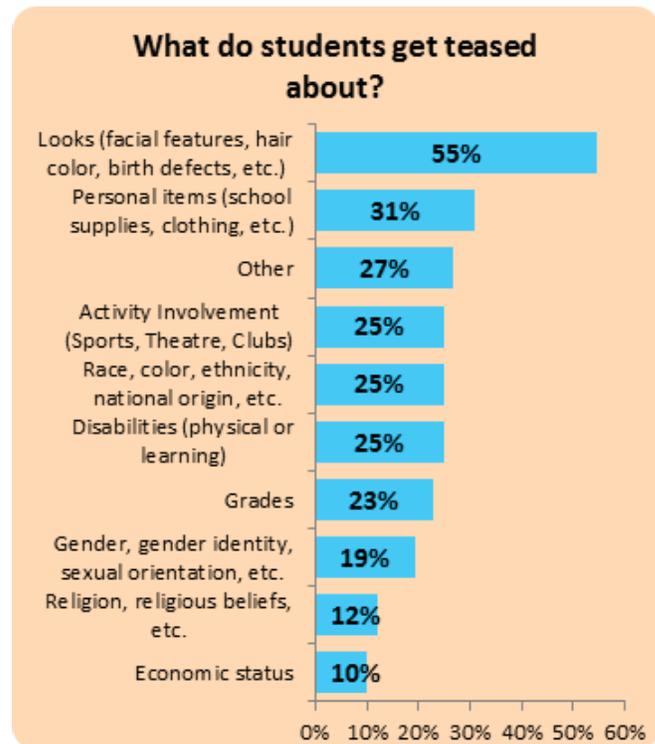
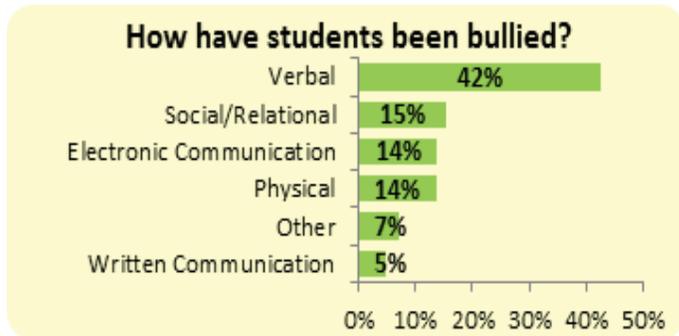
- 24% are witnessing/ experiencing cyber/online bullying at least once a week
- 60% of students agree most students are using social media safely and respectfully...40% do not.
- 16% of students say they have seen online threats from parents and other adults

## Liabilities, Frustrations and Solutions

Social media continues to be a growing challenge for school administrators. Sites like YikYak, Ask.fm, Facebook and others provide numerous avenues for students to share information and have been linked to suicides, murders, violent attacks, sexual abuse and other tragic liabilities. Most school administrators and parents are not actively participating in or monitoring constantly changing social media web sites where students are socializing and sharing information, pictures, videos, etc.

**Realistically, school administrators and parents will never be able to monitor all social media activities of students**, so the key is equipping students with the right awareness and the right tools to recognize and report concerning online behaviors.

### Get the lowdown on Bullying Behaviors:



## Key Findings

### Incident Reporting Liabilities

#### What have students done initially in response to being bullied?

**88%** of students know how and where to report an incident regarding bullying, student safety or concerning behaviors

**87%** of students strongly agree or somewhat agree that there is at least one adult in your school who they feel they can trust and can talk to if needed. (*attention should be given to those 13% that don't!*)

**33%** of students' who have access to an SRO feel comfortable sharing information with SRO

#### For what reasons are students not reporting?

- **28%** are scared to make it worse
- **26%** don't want to be involved
- **23%** don't want to be a snitch
- **20%** don't think it will help

**90%** of students would use, or maybe would use, an online and anonymous reporting tool, if their school had one, to report student safety concerns

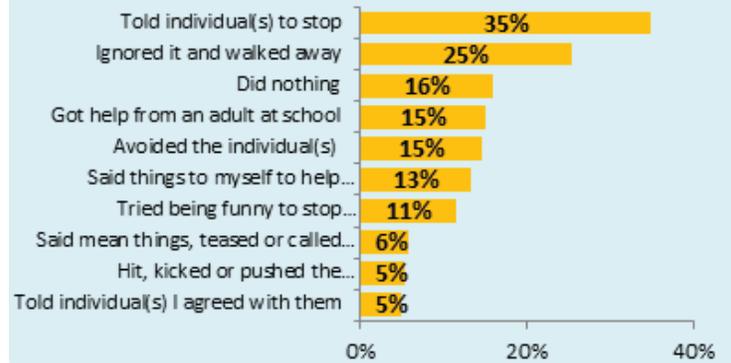
## Liabilities, Frustrations and Solutions

While students may know the school's procedures and how to report student safety concerns, they are either not reporting or when they do report, things are not improving. The **ONLY** way a school can **PREVENT** is if the right people know about the pre-incident indicators and warning signs as students (teachers, staff, parents, etc.) observe them and **BEFORE** the situation escalates into a more serious incident, lawsuit or tragedy.

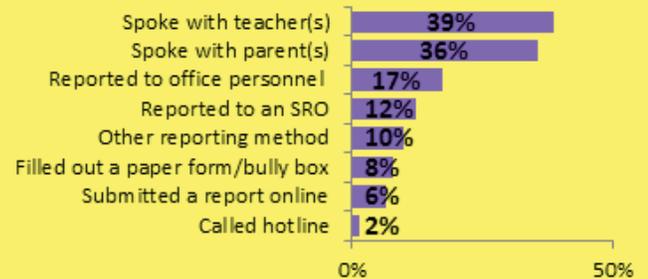
Students reporting incidents to trusted adults is definitely good news, but only if the teachers, office personnel and parents do not become a "silo" – meaning teachers know things, office personnel know things and parents know things, but the right people - threat assessment team members - may not be notified. **While one report on its own may not seem too alarming; if all information is connected, a more comprehensive picture of a student's behavior may evolve and reveal a larger threat.** Evidence from most post-tragedy reports reveal one or more individuals were aware of pre-incident indicators, but if information is not collected in a central secure platform, it is nearly impossible to proactively assess the situation, connect the dots and prevent preventable incidents and tragedies.

Students are more likely to report concerning information about their peers if they are guaranteed anonymity and know their reports will be received, investigated and acted upon (not ignored)...so things get better!

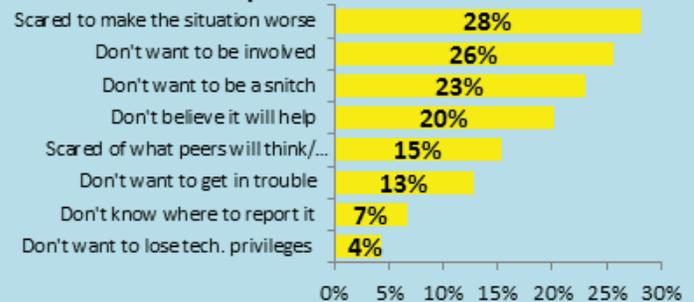
#### What have students done initially in response to being bullied?



#### To whom/where are bullying reports going?



#### For what reasons have bullying/cyberbullying not been reported to the school?



## Key Findings

### Response Liabilities

#### What happens when concerns ARE reported?

- 28% Bully was talked to, but nothing changed
- 21% Nothing
- 17% Bully was punished, but nothing changed

#### When students report bullying concerns:

**Only 17% of the time, does the situation get better**

**(either nothing happens or things get worse)**

*Building a safer and more positive school climate means school administration, faculty and staff must be more proactive. When students do not believe their situation will get better or does not trust adults will take immediate actions, students will take matters into their own hands.*

The teachers and other adults in my school know how to intervene and prevent bullying

**25% disagree**

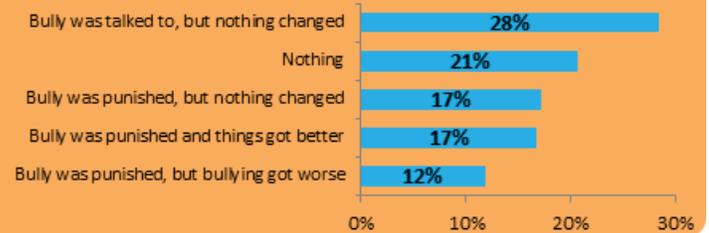
The teachers and other adults in my school always stop bullying immediately when they see it

**31% disagree**

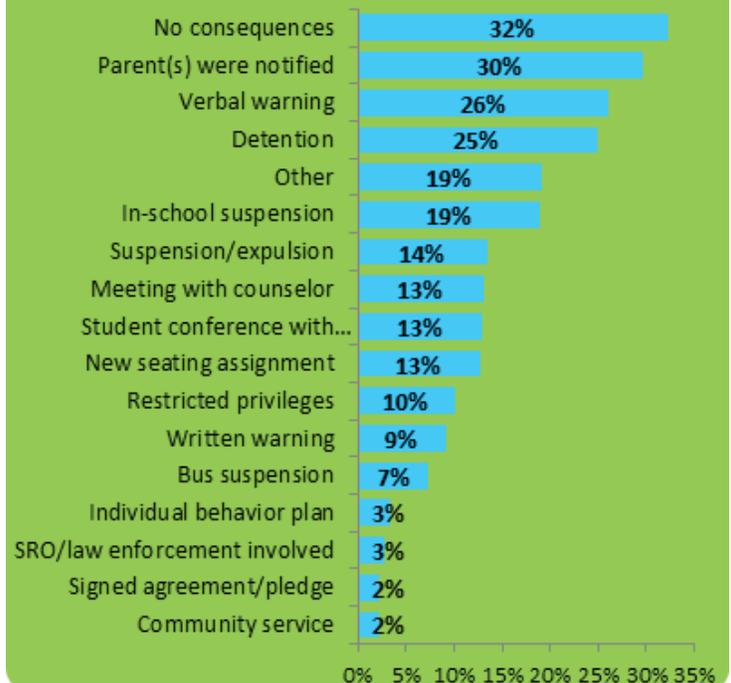
All students are treated fairly in my school

**45% disagree**

#### What happened when bullying/cyber bullying was reported to a students school?



#### What consequences did the bully receive for his/her actions?



## Liabilities, Frustrations and Solutions

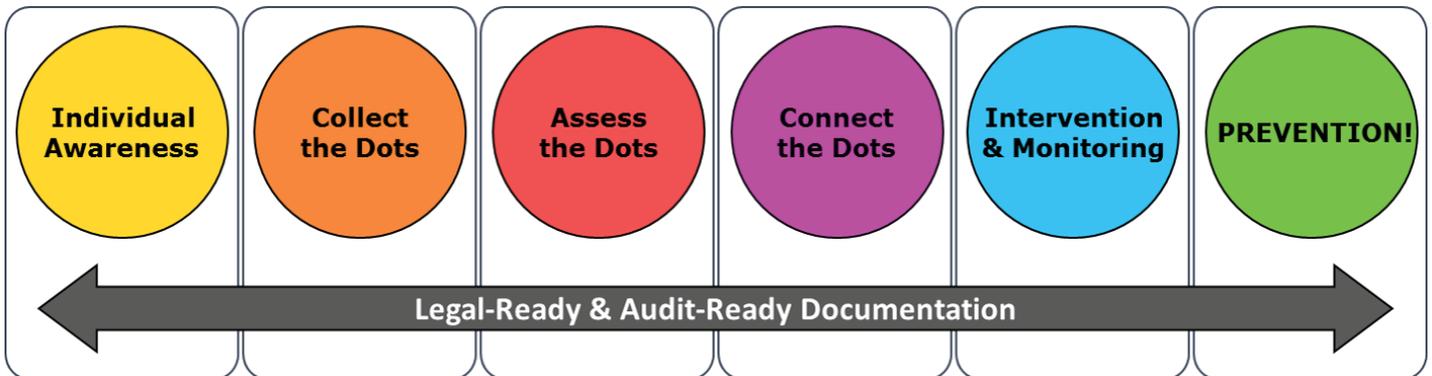
Although most schools have good intentions and policies; intervention and response efforts are consistently lacking and ineffective (in the eyes of your students).

When ONLY 17% of students believe their situation gets better after they report an incident, frustrations mount and students take matters into their own hands, resulting in even more school liabilities.

**Threat assessment and prevention capabilities may represent the biggest liability for schools.** Significant improvements are needed in the way schools collect information from students, and how threat assessment teams communicate and coordinate effectively to formulate effective intervention and response strategies. Without tools to ensure all information is getting to the right people in the right place at the right time, student safety risks will continue to slip through the cracks.

# Conclusion and Next Steps

To proactively prevent mounting liabilities and “costs”, school administrators need to equip everyone in their school and community with the right tools to accomplish these essential steps.



## 6 Action Steps To Start Preventing Liabilities

Post-incident investigation reports reveal pre-incident indicators, concerning behaviors, suspicious activities and warning signs are almost always (if not always) observed and even reported by students, teachers, staff, parents and others. So if pre-incident are almost always there, why are so many schools failing to prevent preventable incidents and tragedies??

To eliminate gaps and disconnects, school administrators must equip their students and adults with the right tools, as well as equipping their threat assessment and safety teams with the right tools to securely share the right information with the right people in the right places at the right time so they can do the right things...right away.

- ✓ Proactively prevent bullying in plain sight areas.
- ✓ Realize anti-bullying policies and buying anti-bullying programs are not enough to prevent liabilities. Students need (and 74% want) ongoing and updated safety information to help them and your school create a better and safer school climate.
- ✓ Give your students a voice and the opportunity to share what they know so school administrators can take immediate and appropriate actions. Sign up for Awareity's free Student Survey at [www.awareity.com](http://www.awareity.com).
- ✓ Implement a central, secure prevention platform that offers real anonymous incident reporting so when students, teachers, staff and others report bullying, cyber bullying, concerning behaviors and other pre-incident indicators, the school's threat assessment team will also be equipped to respond effectively and make things better for students at a much higher percentage than 17% of the time, while also preventing expensive liabilities.
- ✓ Identify the gaps and disconnects in your safety and prevention capabilities by signing up for a FREE Prevention Assessment at <http://awareity.com/prevention-assessment> (limited time only).
- ✓ Contact Awareity at [info@awareity.com](mailto:info@awareity.com) to learn how leading schools and school administrators are eliminating gaps and improving their school climate while also preventing liabilities, saving reputations, saving budgets and saving lives.