



# Promoting Diversity and Respect in New Brunswick Schools

## REPORT ON BULLYING 2017-2020

Education and Early Childhood  
Development

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# **Promoting Diversity and Respect in New Brunswick Schools**

**Report on Bullying 2017-2020**

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## INTRODUCTION

Students, families and educators define bullying as a learned behaviour intended to cause or should be known to cause fear, intimidation, humiliation or other harm to an individual or a group of individuals. There is a power imbalance, real or perceived, between the persons involved that affects the relationships within the positive learning environment of the school.

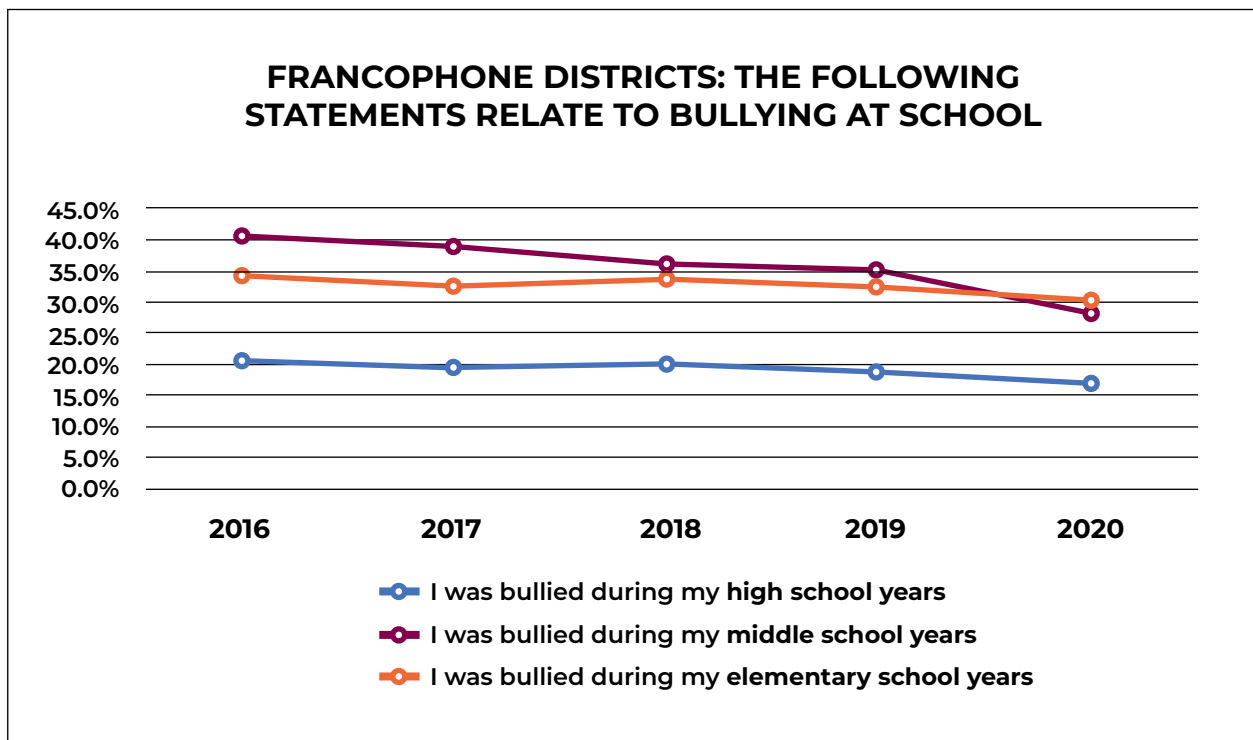
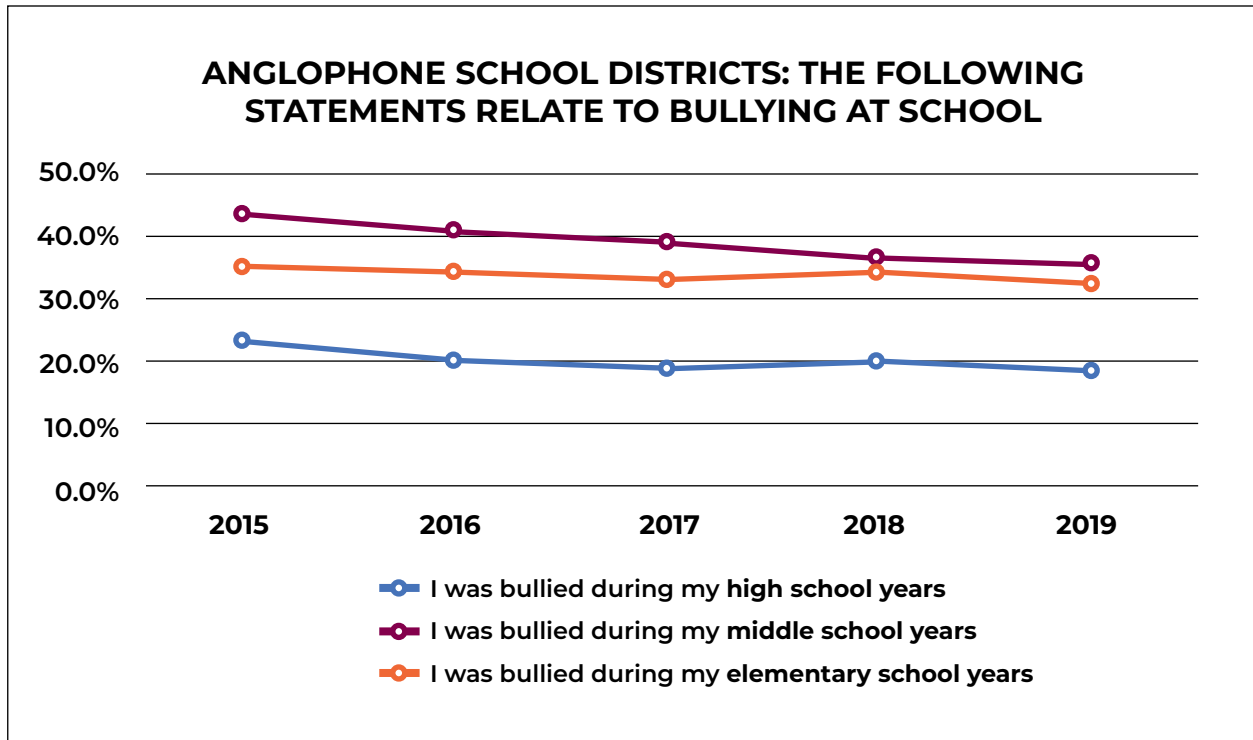
It has a high likelihood of being repeated or has occurred multiple times. Bullying can take many forms, including physical, verbal and non-verbal, social or electronic (cyber). It also includes assisting or encouraging the behaviour in any way.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is committed to ensuring that all public schools have programs and measures in place to help promote positive learning and working environments. Section 56.2 of the *Education Act* states that “The Minister of Education and Early Childhood Development shall lay an annual report on bullying in the New Brunswick public education system before the Legislative Assembly during the course of the regular session of the Legislature that follows the year for which the report is made.”

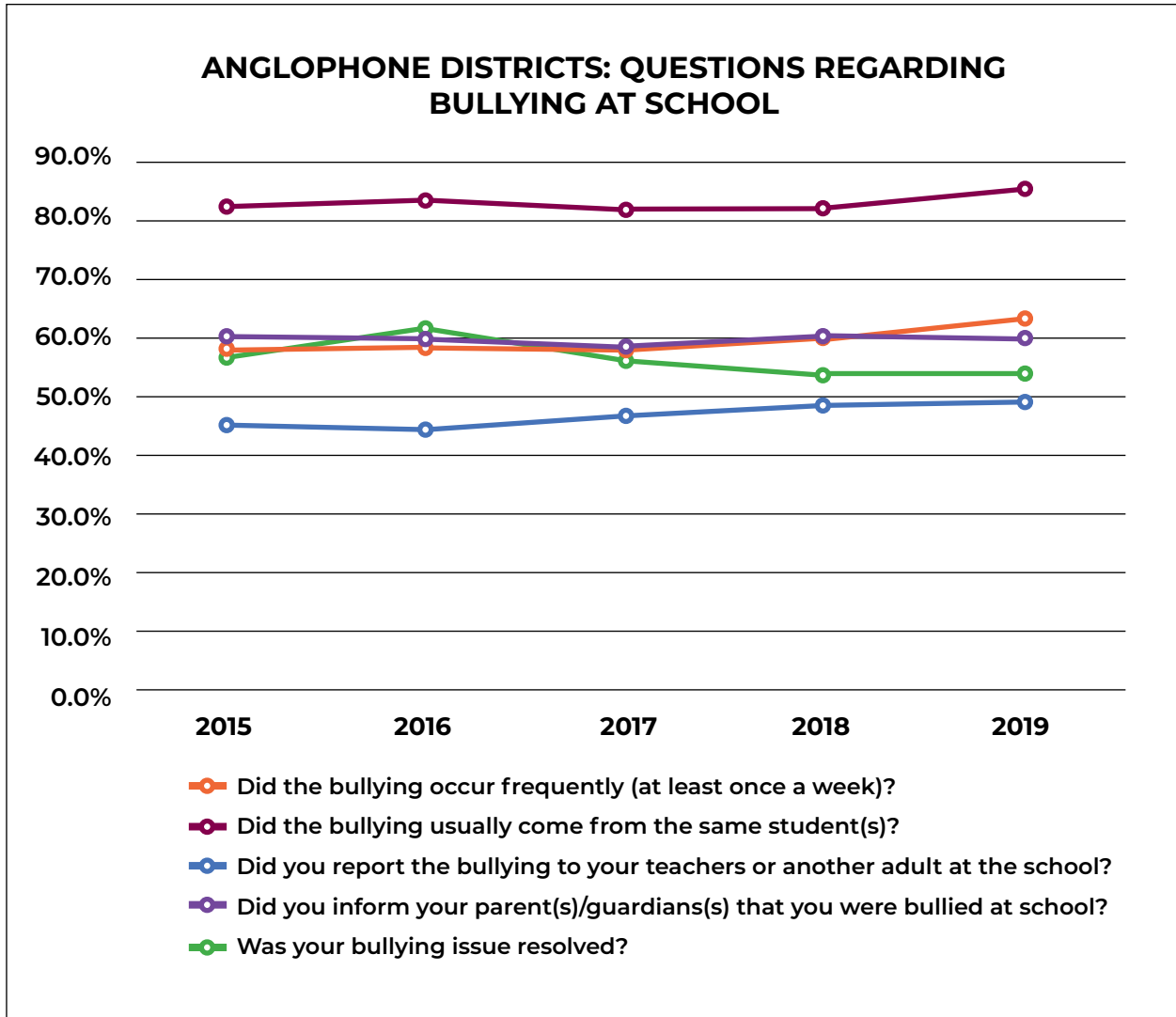
This report provides a statistical overview of bullying in schools for the past five years and outlines the efforts that are being undertaken by schools, districts and the department to encourage a culture of greater respect and diversity.

## TRENDS DURING THE LAST FIVE YEARS

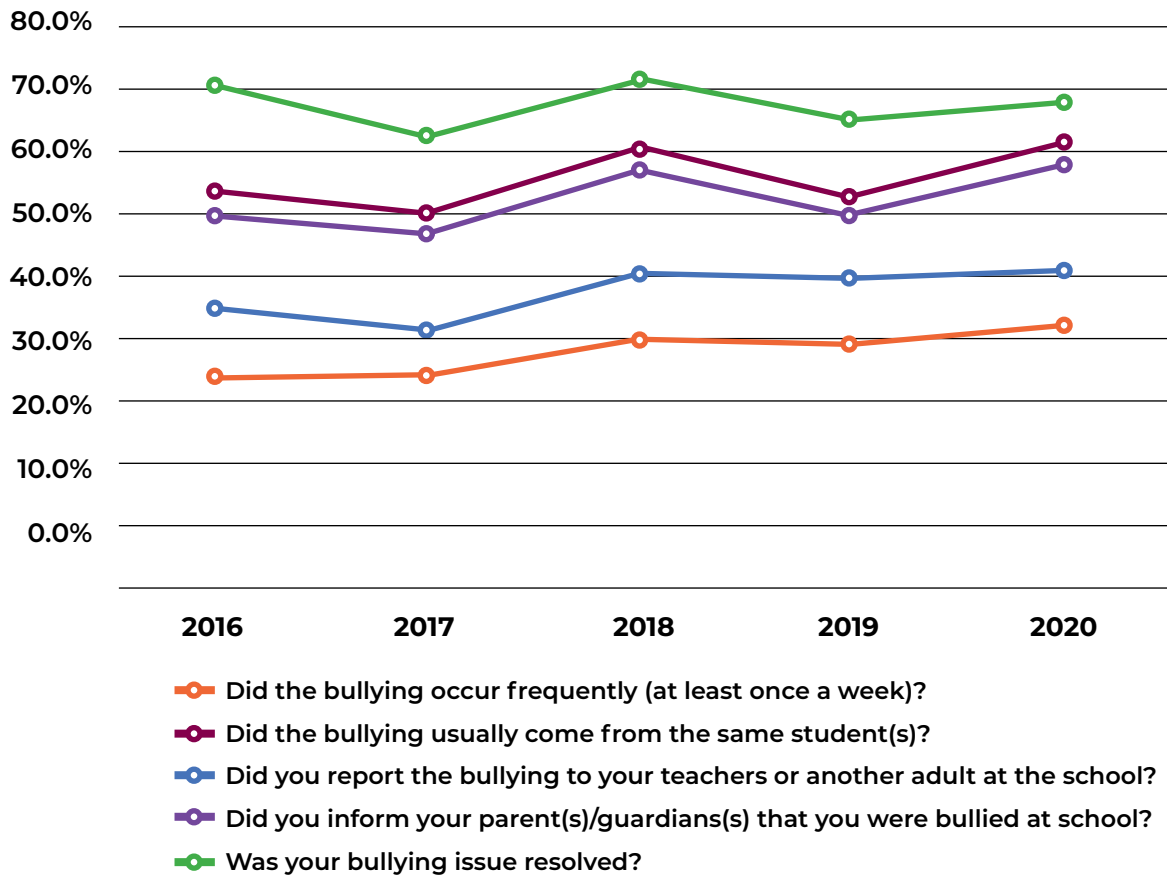
The following statistical information was collected from exit surveys completed by students scheduled to graduate. The statistics cover the school years 2014-2015 to 2019-2020.



When students in the anglophone and francophone districts were asked if they had been bullied, we observed a gradual decrease in the past five years. Students reported that bullying commonly occurred during the middle school years (grades 6 to 8) and the lowest reports of bullying happened during the high school years (grades 9 to 12).



### FRANCOPHONE DISTRICTS: QUESTIONS REGARDING BULLYING AT SCHOOL



Students were asked a series of questions related to frequency, reporting and resolving of bullying issues. In the anglophone sector, the results show that most students are bullied by the same individual. The francophone sector reports a lower frequency (less than once a week) and high rate of resolution. In both sectors trends have remained consistent over time.



# Programs and activities that promote diversity and respect

This section outlines activities and programs in schools and districts that support diversity and respect with the aim to reduce bullying. The following events enhance awareness for students and school personnel and provide an opportunity to further promote diversity and respect:

- Diversity and Respect Week;
- International Day of the Rights of the Child;
- Anti-Bullying Day (or Blue Day);
- Ring a Bell Campaign to Promote Children’s Mental Health;
- Pink Shirt Day, Anti-Bullying Campaign;
- Becca told me to Day;
- *Affiche tes couleurs* provincial summit;
- International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia;
- Pride in Education conference;
- Imagine NB;
- First Nations Day (orange shirt day, blanket exercises); and
- Black History Month.

Students learn how to connect with others in respectful, positive and healthy ways. When schools emphasize respect, diversity and bullying prevention, students can have a better chance to learn positive relationships, social responsibility and citizenship. When students are mindfully taught to recognize and manage emotions, to make decisions effectively and to behave ethically and responsibly, they are better equipped to engage in healthy relationships.

## RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS – UNICEF

The Rights Respecting Schools initiative uses the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* as a basis for building an inclusive and respectful school culture that encourages student engagement. This initiative is provided in collaboration with the Office of the Child and Youth Advocate.



### For more information:

UNICEF CANADA - Rights Respecting Schools:

[www.unicef.ca/en/our-work/article/rights-respecting-schools](http://www.unicef.ca/en/our-work/article/rights-respecting-schools)

## RESPECT IN SCHOOLS – RESPECT GROUP INC.

This online program is designed to provide educators and support personnel with the tools they need to understand and respond effectively to incidents of bullying, abuse, harassment and neglect.



### For more information:

Respect in school:

<http://respectinschool.com>

## CAPACITY FOR COURAGE

Capacity for Courage, a school leadership program, designed to equip school leaders in culturally responsive practice and to create safe and healthy environments for newcomers where developing a sense of belonging is the focus. During the 2018-2019 school year, 23 schools in the anglophone sector were engaged in developing best practices. The 2020-2021 school year, has seen nine Anglophone sector schools and nine Francophone sector schools, engaged with the program. The focus has been further developed to assist newcomer and marginalized populations develop their positive mental health through cultivation of a sense of belonging and purpose through modern career development practices.







## SEXUAL AND GENDER DIVERSITY

From 2017 to 2020, 80 per cent of high schools in the anglophone districts and 80 per cent of high schools in the francophone districts had gay-straight alliances (GSA).

In 2014, the department and Égale Canada, worked with schools, districts and community-based partners to create the New Brunswick LGBTQ inclusive education resource. Since that time, school districts have been responsible for using this resource to provide LGBTQI2S+ inclusive education. This resource helps to guide school staff as they develop and maintain safe and welcoming learning environments.

Each year, the anglophone sector partners with Pride in Education (PIE) to provide a provincial gay-straight alliance student conference. These conferences have been held annually for the past 11 years. The PIE conference is an opportunity for students and educators to celebrate diversity and connect with others throughout the province.

Each year, the francophone sector participated in a provincial summit, *Affiche tes Couleurs*. The last summit was held in Bathurst in February 2019. The one planned for Edmundston in April 2020 was cancelled due to the pandemic.

In May 2019 New Brunswick hosted OUTshine, Canada's LGBTQ youth summit. The bi-annual summit is presented by Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, the only national charity in Canada promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans human rights through research, education and community engagement.



### For more information:

Department of Education and Early Childhood  
Development – New Brunswick LGBTQ Inclusive Education  
Resource:

[www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/  
k12/content/lgbtq.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/education/k12/content/lgbtq.html)



# Anglophone Sector

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS (PBIS)**

This approach identifies common behavioural expectations valued by the school community. These expectations are taught to create an atmosphere in which students know what is expected of them. Introducing, modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important component of a student's educational experience. The approach establishes a climate in which appropriate behaviour is the norm.

In October 2015, the anglophone sector released a resource entitled *Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS): A Resource Guide for School-Based Teams*. Districts were invited to use the document during the 2015-2016 academic year. Feedback and necessary revisions were completed in the spring of 2016. The districts are now provided with annual funding to support this initiative.

## **PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH**

From 2017 to 2019, pilots have been initiated in partnership with WM Wellness Company to facilitate workplace wellness and positive mental health. In the 2020-2021 school year, the department, in cooperation with districts and the WM Wellness company, is supporting schools in a project to increase the psychological well-being and resilience of the school community. The project is focused on wellness, resilience and positive leadership. The mental fitness and resiliency inventory can be facilitated by staff so that strengths within the school can be developed further, which will foster positive school environments.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides funding each year for school staff to receive education on:

- Suicide Prevention (ASIST)
- Mental Health Literacy and Promotion
- Violence Threat Risk Assessment (Level I and II)
- Digital Threat Assessment
- Non-Violent Crisis Intervention (NVCI)
- Crisis Prevention and Intervention
- Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

- LGBTQ+ Inclusive Education
- Trauma-Informed Practice
- Culturally and Linguistically Inclusive Schools
- Translation Services for Newcomer Families
- Anti-Racism Education

## **SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) has been a focus for districts as well as the EECD initiatives. SEL promotes development of the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, relationship skills and responsible-decision making. These core competencies are a lever for equity as they promote respect, healthy relationships and empathy. During the 2017-2020 calendar years, districts have received funding to support the development of SEL initiatives. Weekly SEL webinars have been organized and hosted through by EECD. Over 500 educators have joined the TEAMS page to share best practices and view the webinars on-demand. The department has facilitated numerous school-based professional learning sessions to help stimulate systemic school implementation of SEL practices.

## **CAREER AND MENTAL HEALTH**

In 2019, the department has engaged with Simon Fraser University (SSHRC candidate) in collaboration with two Anglophone districts to explore the connection between good career development and positive mental health. This partnership will assist in providing training and collection of research to support the mental health of students in middle and high school.



# Francophone Sector

## POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH

Since the 2015-2016 school year, the department, in collaboration with the school districts and WM Wellness, is working with schools on an initiative to promote positive mental health and resilience for students and staff. As a result of the Wellness and Resiliency Inventory Survey, staff is able to use evidence-based data to better intervene according to the specific needs of each school.

## OBJECTIVE 1 OF THE 10-YEAR EDUCATION PLAN –

### ENSURE THAT ALL STUDENTS DEVELOP THE COMPETENCIES THEY NEED TO ACHIEVE THEIR CAREER AND LIFE READINESS PLAN

The first goal of the francophone sector 10-Year Education Plan reads: “Ensure that all students develop the competencies they need to achieve their career and life readiness plan.” Among the eight goals of the Education Plan, this goal has quickly become a unanimous priority for all stakeholders in our system, as it alone holds the potential for our aspirations to improve the educational experience of young people and thus, to bring education up to date.

Indeed, to enable each student to be confident in having the skills necessary to develop his or her life and career plans, to thrive in a complex and turbulent world, to reflect on new situations and to reinvent the world, the school is changing its offer and therefore changing certain paradigms. Adopting the perspective of the student’s educational experience means allowing each young person to:

- Feel happy, respected and safe;
- Be recognized for their strengths, interests and aspirations;
- Be motivated in their learning and their future;
  - » School makes sense;
  - » The student has power over the task;
  - » The student has a feeling of competence towards the task.
- Make choices and take responsibility for them;
- Develop confidence in one’s abilities, skills and future choices;
- Explore a multitude of options and to be able to invest in what appeals to them in particular.

## CONCLUSION

While this report shows positive trends from 2017 to 2020, particularly a decrease in bullying at the middle school level, the work is far from done. The department will continue to support our schools and school districts in their ongoing efforts to create and maintain positive learning and working environments that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of the community they serve. Additionally, to provide standards to guide school personnel as they meet the needs and protect the human rights of all LGBTQI2S+ students and their families, the department has recently launched Policy 713 on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity. This policy sets minimum requirements for school districts and public schools to create a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and affirming school environment for all students, families, and allies who identify or are perceived as LGBTQI2S+. This and many other new and ongoing initiatives are helping to fulfil the department's vision to see everyone at their best.

