>> KATHY HATCH: Well, you know what it's about three minutes after the hour.

Hi everyone, I'm Kathy Hatch and I'd like to welcome everyone. Today's call is sponsored by the IL Net and hosted by APRIL. So we're happy you could join us and are looking forward to a lively discussion. We have an hour and a half, so we'll start out by introducing our speaker, who will talk about **"Bullying: Strategies and Partnerships for Change".** We want to keep this as conversational as possible and I know there will be questions that come up as we go through this material, so our presenter will start, and we'll open it up for questions and answers following the presentations. But if you have a question during a presentation, feel free to ask. We want to hear from you.

A little housekeeping before we start. First, we're providing CART captioning services, which can be accessed via our website. Just go to [www.april‑rural.org](http://www.aprilrural.org) and you'll see today's

**IL Conversation** on the front page. First, you'll see a link to CART. You can also send us questions via the chat line on that site. And then, there's a PDF file of John's PowerPoint for today if you'd like to follow along.

Next ‑‑ this is very important ‑‑ please do not put this call on hold. We have had situations where somebody put their call on hold and we ended up listening to their Muzak.

Now, I'd like to ask everyone to put your phones on mute using \* 6. Since this is a Bridgeline, it's pretty sensitive to any background noise and will even pick up paper shuffling so if you would please ‑‑ \* 6. I may mention this several times during the call as new people tend to join throughout. If you'd like to ask a question, \* 6 takes your phone back off mute, too.

OK, let’s get started…

**John Johnson** is the advocate/trainer for Options CIL, based in East Grand forks, Minnesota. Options serves portions of both Minnesota and North Dakota. John has been with Options since 1998 and makes disability‑related presentations at the local, regional, statewide and national levels on a variety of disability topics. In addition to trainings, he works as a systems change advocate, on issues such as housing, transportation and brain injury ‑‑ both traumatic and acquired.

Recently he was instrumental in assisting in the passage of an anti‑bullying law for the state of North Dakota and is working with the Minnesota state attorney general and legislators to introduce such legislation in that state this legislative session. So again, he's here today to talk about "Bullying: Strategies and Partnerships for Change". And now I'd like to turn it over to John Johnson. John.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Thank you, Kathy, you said you hope things go well. Do you have any doubt?

>> KATHY HATCH:, but we are using all kinds of technology…

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Yes, my name is John Johnson, where else would I be from but Minnesota with a name like that? I just returned from California, where I did a national training, so I do get around. If you have a hard time hearing me, I'm undergoing dental work over the summer so I'll try to talk as slow as possible if there is something you don't understand or don't hear, I will certainly repeat it.

We're going to touch a little on bullying in general and how it differs from harassment. Let me tell you a story. This summer I have a high school class reunion. I won't tell you how many years, but I do remember the Beatles. In about fifth grade, there was a young girl who came to our school. One of the boys in our class said that she had lice. She didn't have lice but that stigma carried through school with her, don't touch that girl, she has lice. This little girl would walk the hallways with her head down. She was a pretty smart girl, honor roll. Quite attractive, but really didn't have any friends.

In high school, nobody dated her because of the stigma of this boy saying that she has lice stayed with her.

She has never come to any reunion in the past, and I don't blame her.

In high school, I was a power player, student government, athlete, whatever. I never teased her about having lice but I never stopped it either. I never stepped forward to say, knock it off, give it a break. I did not do that. I followed the crowd. Didn't tease her, thankfully my folks raised there boy well enough that I would not do that but I didn't stop it either.

In planning for this summer’s reunion, I wondered if this girl would come. She was sent information and didn't respond. I called her and she said yes, she plans to come. I said, oh, great, I hope to see you. I hope she does.

We're going to address today about how something like that can carry forward with a person.

We have a person on our staff who has cerebral palsy. He is in his 40s. He was called gimper and retard when he was in school. He sometimes goes out with me when I go to the schools to give anti‑bullying talks. He says I have forgiven those people who called me gimper or retard but I have not forgotten.

Prior to being a jock in high school, I was fat. And in fifth grade this poem was said to me. Fatty, fatty two‑by‑four. Can’t get through the bathroom door.

Now that's a long time ago that I was in fourth or fifth grade but I still remember that little rhyme and I still remember those kids that said that to me. The harm and the damage of bullying can carry on for a long time. I've had adults, teachers, social workers, when I have given this type of talk, come up to me afterwards and say, I was picked on, I was bullied when I was in school and I remember the kids who did that.

Maybe that never happened to some of you. Maybe some of you are going through your mind and saying, yeah, that did happen. or I remember that happening in my school.

So today, hopefully we're going to learn some techniques and some things that will help address that. Bullying and the focus of this is not just on disability, although that's the main point.

90% of kids with autism are bullied in school. 6% of bullies have criminal records by the age of 24. You may remember something on television perhaps about a year ago where this college student was outed on Facebook as being a homosexual. He had a hard time dealing with that and ended up committing suicide. I believe this was on the east coast.

Sometimes race is an issue. I have a step‑grandson who is half Native American and half Caucasian. His coloration is white but he has some Native American features. High cheek bones, a little slanting of the eyes, extremely dark hair. In his high school he is bullied by the white kids who call him "breed". He is also bullied by the Native American kids who call him a "wanna‑be". In fact, the bullying got so difficult for this young man that he left the public high school in his town and went to what they call in Minnesota a charter school. They're state‑run schools.

Also in the workplace, we'll talk about that. In the workplace it's more commonly referred to as harassment. Harassment is illegal. Let me repeat that. Harassment in most states is illegal. Bullying as an adult in most states is not illegal.

Harassment in the workplace can be because of age, race, skin color, religion, disability, sex gender, sex orientation, family status, criminal status. Technically, the difference in the workplace ‑‑ I'm going to touch briefly on the workplace. **Workplace harassment** usually involves an intrusive component that entails physical contact. **Workplace bullying** is almost always psychological. That differs between youth and adults.

Workplace harassment is usually linked to sex, race or discrimination. Workplace bullying is usually a staged attack on a person's competency. A person in the workplace who is being harassed usually knows it. If someone is in your space or makes you uncomfortable in a sexual way, you know that. Oftentimes bullying in the workplace, a person doesn't realize it until damage is done.

When we get to the school, we're going to talk about different states and their laws. As Kathy mentioned, 49 states have a law against bullying in the public schools. One state does not. If anybody is from Montana, your state does not have an anti‑bullying law. If somebody wants to shout out their state and how their law ranks, I've got that law ranking. It's on the web page that I have up there, it's on the last page.

We (Options CIL) serve two states, I'm over looking a river, and that separates the two states. North Dakota passed an anti‑bullying law, I helped initiate last legislative session. That was not going to be passed until a 16‑year‑old girl hung herself because she was being cyber bullied. We did not get one state legislator to come to our anti‑bullying workshops until that young girl hanged herself. Then the law passed both houses. It's rated A‑plus‑plus legislation.

Kathy also mentioned that I was working to initiate something in Minnesota. Minnesota has a law, it's one of those “feel good” laws. We have a law, but there're no teeth in it. There're no mandates for schools to participate, there's no consequences if schools do not participate. There is no mandate that schools have an anti-bullying curriculum within their school, there is no mandate for training or in‑service for teachers.

Now, the types of bullying.

**Verbal** is the most common type of bullying. I mentioned my co‑worker who was called a gimper, a retard.

**Physical** is what we see on television. The hitting, punching, shoving, those kinds of things.

There was something, I think it was on CNN not too long ago, where it was this father whose daughter was being bullied on the bus. He went to the bus stop. He was going to talk to the bus driver and tell the driver what was going on. He saw the student that had been bothering his daughter. He confronted the young man, got physical. He ended up getting in trouble with the bus system, with the parents and school district, but the physical bullying is the hitting, punching, shoving.

Then there's **indirect** bullying. That's usually gossip, spreading false rumors. I will be very blunt in my language. In junior high, among girls, that's where this is the most prevalent, in the middle school and high school years. This type of bullying is most prevalent amongst females. They may say terrible things about a girl, something about her clothing. That's the indirect gossip and spreading rumors.

Then there's the **social** bullying which is like, “you can't sit with us, you can't sit at our lunch table, you can't walk with us in the hallway.” We've seen situations in the lunchroom as low as fifth graders. One mother called me and said that her daughter was being excluded, she took her tray to a table and this group of fifth grade girls said, “get out of here, we don't want you to sit with us at our table.” That’s social alienation. Also, birthday parties or gatherings where certain people will be excluded.

Then there's **intimidation**. We have had reports in lower elementary grades, third, fourth, where one girl will say, “get me an extra dessert, get me this” -- they're kind of their go‑fer – “or I won't let you be my friend.”

We have talked about verbal, physical indirect, social and intimidation types of bullying.

The last is **cyber** bullying. I have a son who is a city police officer. He is assigned to one of the high schools in town. He says the texting and cyber bullying goes on 24/7. They don't allow texting in the building. Does that mean it doesn't go on? Of course not. But if they see it, teachers, staff, police officer and other school security, they will confiscate the cell phone or whatever for day. But he said it happens as soon as the school day is over and it doesn't let up, it goes on all night long.

Again, when I was in school and when I was going through my fat period, if I got bullied, when I got home I was safe. When I got home I had a supportive family where I forgot about that sort of thing. I could go on with my day, I could play outside, play with my dog, watch television, whatever it might be. And then the thought of being bullied didn’t really hit me again until I got to school the next day.

With cyber bullying, it's 24/7 and that goes down to the lower elementary as well.

One of the interesting statistics, bullies have at least one criminal conviction by the age of 24. Statistically, parents are telling surveys that they fear bullying of their child over kidnapping, over domestic terrorism or suicide. They fear their child being bullied more than being kidnapped, being a victim of terror or even suicide.

A lot of times schools are in denial. That happens a lot. Let me finish my point about Minnesota. They have one of those “feel good” laws. We have many schools on our Minnesota side, who say, “it just doesn't happen in our school. This does not happen in our school.” But we've had reports, from parents who have transferred their children to a different school. We have even had parents who moved out of state because of bullying. Anti‑bullying programs, and schools that have anti‑bullying programs have shown that bullying in their school drops by 50 percent. Sometimes schools are not consistent, sometimes their programs are too weak.

I am a former school counselor. Back then, bullying existed, but we didn't have the means to deal with it that we have today. Oftentimes schools put the two people together. You guys, or you students -- work it out. You seem to have an issue.

Bullying is not a conflict. It does not need remediation. Bullying is about power. Let's say that a woman is being abused by her partner, whether it be husband, boyfriend, lover or whatever. Would you tell that woman, “just work it out?” Of course not. If a person is raped, whether it be a man or woman, would you say, “you two just work it out.” How ridiculous is that? That happens in some of the schools and maybe in schools you're familiar with. You two students seem to be having a difficult situation, why don't you work it out. No way - Bullying is about power.

I talked to a young lady one time who was a bully and said, “why do you do that?” Does it make you feel better about yourself? Do you feel good about yourself when you do it? She said, “no, it doesn’t make me feel better about myself, but I know it makes them feel worse. That was her response.

We're going to talk a little bit about a school survey that's out there. But I think now it's a good place to stop. Okay. I've had kind of introduction, I'm looking at my timer. It's about the half hour mark so I would like to stop here now and if we have any questions about what I have said so far.

>> KATHY HATCH: That's fine. I have nothing on the chat at this point. If anyone has a question, just unmute your phone. Hit \* 6 again and go ahead and ask.

>> Participant: I have a question.

>> KATHY HATCH: Okay.

>> Participant: This is Chris in North Carolina, I am trying to find out about using the ***Kids on the Block*** program. I would like to piggyback that with what you're teaching me today.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Kathy, can you rephrase that? It was very choppy, I could not understand.

>> KATHY HATCH: She is from North Carolina and they have the ***Kids on the Block*** program. She was saying she would like to piggyback what you're saying with what their program is. If you can say anything to that.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I have several model school programs. I'm not saying they are all‑encompassing but I'll get into that a little bit later. We'll talk about some of the different kinds of programs that are out there, in different communities. And I want to stress this is not ‑‑ I'll get to that in a bit, too. This is not just a school problem: it's often a community problem. Good question. Hang on to it. If I don't answer that to your satisfaction when I get to it, raise it again. Okay?

>> Participant: Thank you.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Anything else? Okay. I'll go on. Bullying is repetitive and it can be over the silliest things. I have three children. Two are pretty tough, nobody messes with them. They would stand up for themselves. One was much more passive. I bought him a pair of jeans when he was in 6th grade. I thought they were pretty cool jeans. They had zippers on the pockets. They had lots of pockets, four in the front, two in the back, all with zippers.

His teacher called one day saying he was sick. And so I went to get him. I said, “Are you sick? You were fine this morning. Not feeling good?”

Long story short, he was faking illness the days he wore those pants because some of his friends – some of the people he thought were his friends – were making fun of him because he was wearing those jeans with zippers. What I'm getting at is sometimes children will feign sickness in order to avoid bullying.

We also service reservations. One time I went to one, there were tribal police officers and so forth. One of the social workers said absenteeism is rampant and that bullying is a key component. There's often times students who stay home because they are afraid of being bullied and they have low self‑esteem. Remember the little girl I mentioned that was said to have lice? She would walk with her head down in the hallway. Low self‑esteem. Depression, loneliness, anxiousness. Suicidal thoughts. I mentioned earlier the young lady who hung herself. She was a high school junior, age 16. Hung herself because she was being cyber bullied.

The U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights has a fact sheet that says if a student on an IEP is being bullied, that it is illegal. The Office of Civil Rights can enforce that. They can make it very difficult for a school if a child with a disability is being bullied because that is illegal under the Office of Civil Rights or the U.S. Department of Education. That fact sheet was put out on October 26th of 2010.

We oftentimes tell parents, get bullying written into your child's IEP, then if it happens you really have the school, you have them in much more of an accountable situation.

Also, one of the things, if a student reports that they are being bullied, do not ignore it. Talk to the child. Sometimes you have to be direct with them and sometimes you have to be very subtle.

As I mentioned, I have three children, I talked to them and said, “Is anybody picking on you?” They said “No.” The one child did not want me to get involved at all, so I didn't. By the way, I burned the pair of jeans when it finally came out after much talking with him that the reason he was getting bullied was because of those jeans with zippers. I live in a rural area. We went out to our burn barrel and burned them together. Is it legal to burn in our jurisdiction? No. Did I do it? Yes. It made a point.

Talk to your children and listen to them. We've had situations where many children have told their parents don't get involved. Don't get involved because it will just get worse for me. The school will single me out. That's happened a lot.

When we were working to get this law passed in North Dakota, we wanted a bunch of parents to testify about the fact that bullying did exist. Several parents said it exists; even gave us examples. We said, “Do you want to testify to that?” They said, “No, no, no! I won't because there will be reprisals against me and my community, reprisals against my student.” So, oftentimes parents are afraid to come forward. In North Dakota we finally did get some parents to come forward.

I'm going to comment on a term made public by Sarah Palin. She considered herself a “momma grizzlie.” We got a bunch of momma grizzlies to go before the legislature and testify. We didn't get many, but the ones willing to step up and testify were very effective and that also helped get the legislation passed.

Sometimes parents will slough off bullying. There's a pastor in our community, a woman pastor. She said that when she was in school on the bus kids would bully her. She told me the reason, I've forgotten. Doesn't matter, they bullied her. She had a new dress and that dress got torn as a result of some kids rough housing with her, picking on her on the school bus. She got home and of course her father was angry. His comment was what did you do to provoke them? This father turned this back on his daughter who was the victim. She said she never went back to her dad again because he turned it right back around on her.

We tell parents also if they choose to come forward, to ask their child where it happened, when it happened and did anybody else see it happen.

We had a situation last year where a young child with a disability had a hoody. He was outside in the playground and some kids took him in his hoody and hung him on a chain‑link fence. They lifted him up and left him there. Now, In our part of the world in winter time it gets cold, and the teacher said where is Bobby? Nobody knew. And then finally, somebody said, “I think he is still on the playground.” They went out and found him on the chain‑link fence. Nobody fessed up about who did it and they never got to the root of it. Sometimes parents need to keep records of those kinds of things.

I mentioned coldness in our part of the world and I'm getting to the point where it's not always a school problem. Hockey is a big sport in our part of the world because it's cold, because we have ice and kids like to play hockey.

Sometimes parents have to spend thousands of dollars sending their children to hockey camps so they get to be a better hockey player. This one dad was telling me at a workshop I did, “My son was in 9th grade and before 9th grade, you're not part of a school team, you're part of a community team. These are usually run through a local charitable organization, because it's very expensive to run this program.” And sometimes parents pay for it out of their own pocket. This parent said that his son was a very good player. One day the son said, “I'm not going out for hockey anymore.” It turns out he was being bullied. He was the best goalie in this particular area of town, but a more popular kid also played goalie. So the other popular kids picked on this kid so he would quit.

And the father said, “You know, my son's welfare, my son's peace of mind was the most important issue.” However, he said, “I’d spent about $10,000 in hockey equipment, and programs and camps until this point but my son just couldn't put up with it anymore.”

So it's not just a school issue. Again, sometimes schools remove bullies from the classroom, they give them school suspensions. Again, that’s not always a good idea. I was a school counselor. Some students cause disruption on purpose so they get suspended from school. That’s a reward! Why not get kicked out so I can roam the streets or stay home and watch soap operas all day long? A good bullying program should **make counseling mandatory for the** **person being bullied** and also some kind of **mandatory psychological counseling or anger management or whatever training for the person doing the bullying**.

Okay. Schools need a strong commitment from their administration. Again, can be a problem. There has been a problem in some of our schools where administrators will say it's not a problem in our school.

My step‑grandson, the part Native American young man? His principal said, “I've got 3,000 students in this school, I can't be everywhere and watch every student.” That's passing the buck.

The curriculums, and this is where I'll try to address this person from North Carolina who had the question about different kinds of programs. In our school, in our town, and it's a town of about 50,000 people, they have one of the more popular anti‑bullying intervention programs. Its called the Dan OLWEUS program. With a name like John Johnson, I should be able to pronounce this. A college professor at the University of ‑‑ O‑L‑W‑E‑U‑S program.

>> Participant: I believe they pronounce that ol‑vay‑us.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: All schools had to have the plan in by July 1 and every school met the deadline. They had to submit a curriculum. Whatever she said, that **Olweus Intervention Program** was one of the more popular ones. It involves the teachers and parents, for students age 5 all the way up through high school.

There's one called the **PBIS, Positive Behavior and Support** program. There's one called **Steps to Respect** and a follow‑up is **Second Step**. There's one called Responsive classroom. There's one called lion's quest. There's a program called by pacer, it's if you Google pacer you will find their program. It's also one of the more popular ones. In our area, Olweus, PBIS and Steps to Respect and Second Step or the more popular programs for schools.

Involved more than schools, as I said, our community is about 50,000 people. The teachers this summer are undergoing training on this particular program. They also involve the city law enforcement. Our city happens to be a county seat so it has a city police department and the sheriff's office and they're both involved. Some of the other entities are involved, as well.

One of the open forum meetings on this topic, one of the major components that we found interesting is that when we went to these communities and had these open meetings, they were advertised, open meeting on bullying, who could come. Parents of course, but very few teachers.

Our second largest group was the clergy. In your area, the clergy should be involved or faith‑based groups. I asked the clergy, do you see it? They said, “Yes, in our catechisms, in Sunday school, we see bullying.” I said, “What do you do?” “We say to knock it off.”

I said, “Do you ever address it from the pulpit? Do you speak on bullying?” I did not get one yes from the clergy. I said, “Why not? Doesn't it follow from the Bible?” They said, “Yeah.” I said, “Aren't there some passages that you could develop a message from?” They said “Yeah.” I said “Why don't you do it?” They said, “Never thought of it.” My church has never addressed it nor have I asked them to or addressed it with them. But a message from the local spiritual leader is important.

Here's what I'm getting at -- bullying is not just a school problem.

I mentioned this third or fourth grader that was having other girls get her an extra dessert at lunch or “If you don't do this for me you can’t be my friend.” or “I didn't bring my lunch today, but when you go through the lunch line, bring me an extra banana, and if you don't you won't be my friend.”

A mother called me and said it's not surprising this fourth or fifth grader is doing this because the child’s mother had also been a bully when she was in school. That sort of thing does happen.

Anyway, community groups, other kinds of groups could be involved. 4‑H groups, scouts, Big Brothers‑Big Sisters programs, where those kind of things could be addressed as well to get the message across.

Some communities like Monroe County New York (and I'm not sure where that is) have developed billboards in the communities. They’ve put up some tips on bullying on those billboards. They have a bullying, anti‑bullying task force in that community.

Okay. Does your state have a law?

As I mentioned, South Dakota this past spring, became the 49th state to pass a law. Some of the laws are rated A‑plus‑plus and this is done by the bully police. I'll give you the website so you can check your state. It's [www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org). First state was Georgia, I heard Kathy say there's somebody from Georgia on here, and the last was South Dakota. Montana, you're the only state that does not have a law. If you go to the website, you'll see the grades for the state's. Some are A‑plus‑plus. Am I smart enough to write South Dakota's law? No. We copied from the state of Wyoming. I went to a state senator and said why reinvent the wheel? There's is an A‑plus‑plus law right here. So, North Dakota's law looks basically like Wyoming’s. Delaware, another A‑plus‑plus state. By the way, Georgia, you're an A‑plus‑plus state. You're too populated for us in North Dakota to copy. I mentioned Minnesota (where I live) which has 5 and a half million people.

Our law is rated as a C minus. Now there's a “feel good” law. No teeth, no mandates for any kinds of school follow up. You can look up your state to find out where you stand.

I'm going to stop there. We're at a little under an hour. I have about 10 to 15 minutes left and we can throw it open to questions.

>> KATHY HATCH: \* 6 to come off mute.

>> Participant: Could you repeat the website?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: [www.bullypolice.org](http://www.bullypolice.org)

>> Participant: It says .com on the last page. When I went to it, it's not free, you have to pay.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: If it says .com, I have to change that. I'm not smart enough to write a law, sometimes I'm not smart enough to transpose either. Sorry.

>> JOHN J: I started off saying I was a power player in my high school, after I got over being fat, and I did nothing about it (bullying). What can be done? Are the cool kids doing it? Sometimes they are. Sometimes the cool kids are the ones that are doing the bullying. What can you do as a student? What can you encourage, your son or daughter or other kids that you may work with to do? Say some kind words to the student being bullied. Be a friend to them. Tell an adult.

Kathy and I talked about this earlier when I discussing this presentation. Go to your teacher. What if your teacher is the one doing the bullying? It happens. We had a young man 16 with autism, being bullied by his high school shop teacher. The mother went to the school. She was told, Oh, that's just Mr. Jones, he's that kind of a way.” “She said, “But my son has autism. He responds differently from some other children, but I want him to be in shop. Shop is good for him.” The school did nothing about it until they got a lawyer involved, until they got our CIL involved. Our direct service staff goes to IEP meetings with students, they will also go with parents, they will talk to the schools, because sometimes the parents don’t know the questions to ask. Sometimes they take an advocate along who knows the questions and your rights. With the involvement of a lawyer and our CIL staff, that shop teacher got removed from that session. He didn’t get fired, did not get fired, because our state has a strong, strong teachers union. (Our legislature tried to restrict teacher tenure laws this last year and got completely shot down.) The teacher's union got up in arms, so the teacher did not get fired but was removed from that session. A different teacher taught the class.

Sometimes adults do that, as well. We've had situations where people with disabilities living in group homes are being harassed or bullied by staff. And so sometimes you have to deal with that.

Sometimes Student Council can be an active player. There are some schools that have had Student Councils do a be-a-friend-for-the-day kind of thing, where the Student Council, the leaders of the school, get involved and they say, “Hey, bullying is not cool!” But other students can be a friend to someone too.

I wish ‑‑ I wish I would have said to someone who told that little girl who had lice, “Knock it off, this isn't cool. Back off. I just didn't do it.” Say kind words to the child being bullied. Did I do that? No, I just ignored her.

Talk with someone else, about what is happening. And who to go to in a school?

As a school counselor, I used to get that a lot, so‑and‑so is picking on me or punching me or so‑and‑so is doing this or that. And you try to work with that as best you could.

I had one football player, picking on a kid with ADHD. The football player came from a very dysfunctional family. His mom and dad got drunk every night; didn't come to the boy’s school activities. The football player became really angry, really aggressive. The coach knew how to channel that aggression on the field. But one day, this little kid with ADHD was talking to him, you know, and his football player hauled off and punched him. The kid with ADHD came to see me and talked to me.

I talked to the football player, asked, “Did you do this?” He said, “Yeah.” I said, “How come?” He said, “He can't keep his mouth shut.” I said, “Do you know this kid looks up to you?” He said, “What do you mean he looks up to me?” I said, “Yeah, he would give anything to be 6'3" and 215 and play football like you and be popular with the girls. But he’s about 5 foot 5 and 130 pounds, with ADHD. He would love to be you.” He said, “But his parents are rich.” I said, “Doesn't matter, he wants to be you.” I said, “This discipline referral will not hit the principal's desk if you invite this kid to lunch.” He said, “What, what? No way!” I said, “Do you want to play?” He said, “Yes.”

They did invite the kid to sit with them at lunch. I witnessed that when I went to the lunchroom. I never had another report that this kid was picked on by this football player. Did they become fast friends? They didn’t, but at least we resolved that situation.

So a consistent message ‑‑ and we didn't have an anti‑bullying curriculum in our school. As a counselor, I just tried to deal with the situations as best I could.

It's a community issue. Law enforcement can't really do anything unless a law is broken. Parents say, “So‑and‑so is picking on my kid.” Talk to the parents. They say, “I can't do anything unless a law is broken.” Sometimes law enforcement, most of the schools ‑‑ I shouldn't a most, many of the larger schools in our area have a cop assigned to their school. Unfortunately that's a sign of today's society. Sometimes those police officers are doing a really good job on that kind of thing.

Okay. **What goes into an effective school law?**

**The word bullying must be in the text.**

**It must be an anti‑bullying law and not just a school safety law.**

**It should differentiate between bullying and harassment.**

**You should NOT define victims.** Okay if you are this class, okay, and I threw out some categories of groups of people who are subject to bullying. That should not be in the law. So you shouldn't define the victim.

**A good law involves the entire state** starting with the top education professional in the state, whether a State School Superintendent or director of Department of Education, it should go through the school district. The law that was passed in North Dakota this past year, called for community meetings so the school could not just write their own law, there had to be community meetings to find out what the issue was in your particular state or in your particular community. It might be different. We have some urban school districts and some very rural school districts.

I mentioned I got back from L.A. giving a talk on Friday, and I was in this one town, the next Monday morning giving an anti‑bullying talk. This one town had kindergarten through 12th grade with only 63 students. We don't have anything urban like L.A. in our state, but what I'm saying is that this happens ‑‑ these were parents that wanted this talk. They went to their administration, said “We want to have this talk. We want to educate our kids because bullying is happening.” 63 students and this was occurring.

**You've got to have a set of rules and policies.**

**It has to be inclusive of both the public and private schools**. That's one thing that brought North Dakota an A‑plus‑plus rating because the school law affected not only the public schools but the private schools. You might say the private schools, why did they have to comply? Because they ride public school buses, they get money for their meal programs and they get government dollars to support their private schools.

**A good law mandates that schools have a starting date for the policy and a training curriculum for the teachers and students that addresses attitudes.** We hear things like, “Kids have always bullied, it was there 60 years ago when I started teaching, it's the same now. There are curriculums for the students and teacher, as well.

**Then there should be some teeth in the law if the schools do not comply.**

I use a survey that’s pretty comprehensive. It starts with grade four and runs through grade 12. It's anonymous. Questions like, “Do you feel safe in school? On your way to and from school? Do you feel safe on the bus?” A lot of bullying occurs on the bus. The survey talks about being bullied physically, socially, electronically, racially, gender. “Have you witnessed it? Have you witnessed another student verbally being bullied, physically, socially, electronically, racially? Have you ever stayed away from school because of being bullied? Where does it occur?” Most common place bullying occurs is in school locker rooms. This happens a lot.

“Where does it happen in your school? Classrooms, hallways, entrances, exits, library, gyms, washrooms?” That happens a lot, too. When I was in high school, like I said back in the day, that's where most of the stuff went on, especially the boys' bathroom. “Buses, playground, on the way to school?” Some kids will even take a circuitous route to school to avoid it. When I was in school, we avoided the area where the tough kids hung out and smoked. Lunchroom? Off the school property?” Off school property was where our students smoked. “On field trips or extra curricular activities?” We had examples where kids stayed away from school field trips because they knew they would be bullied or excluded. “Where are you most at risk of being bullied? Classes, after school, lunches, on the weekend, field trips? What did you do about it?” If you look this up, it's a good comprehensive survey of what’s happening. We give this to a lot of parents and they were going to share this with their school and take it to their community meetings when their schools initiated or were discussing their anti‑bullying program.

Sometimes my talks run two hours but again, I don't see you and it's really tough to listen to someone for an hour or so. When I get direct interaction with my audience it tends to be a little more energized not only for myself but for the people listening. So I'll stop. Are there any questions?

>> Participant: This is Janet from Massachusetts. What do you do about cyber bullying? What are some of the best techniques to try to stop cyber bullying?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: That's a tough one. Well, monitor your child's cell phone. That's tough to do. I know when we had elementary students being cyber bullied, the parents would check the cell phones and maybe block some numbers. I know if they saw some things on there that were inappropriate, they would block those numbers so that those texts could not be received by their child. Now, spreading rumors, that the child does not see again, my son who is a cop in this one school ‑‑ I'm going to be very graphic here, pardon me.

>> Participant: Please.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: For this one young lady, it was going around school that she had had sex with the hockey team. She did not, but it with us going around school that so‑and‑so, let's pick a name, Sonia had sex with the hockey team at a party. That went around the whole school. She knew nothing about the rumor, but it went around the whole school that it happened and there was no way to stop it. School investigated it and they got to the root of who did it. With cell phones ‑‑ texting leaves a trail. So they got to it and dealt with it. But it was too late and the damage was done.

This is for our area, urban school, as urban as 50,000 can be, we have three public high schools in our town. You know, that got around. Was Sonia's reputation damaged? Probably. Some just said, that's funny and blew it off.

That other 16‑year‑old girl that hung herself ‑‑ my children are adults. At 16, did I have the right to go check their cell phones for text messages? Didn't have them back when my kids were 16 but I wouldn’t do that. That's a really tough question.

That's what happened to the kid on the east coast…some place on the east coast where this young man was on the internet and people started texting or blogging about his sexual orientation, he hung himself.

My wife smokes. All the grandchildren say, “Grandma, you shouldn't smoke.” She says, “I know. I know I shouldn't smoke.” She doesn't smoke in front of them, but she smokes. I think smoking is less of a situation now among school kids than it used to be. I think so. Why? Education. When I talk to schools, I tell them, “Your 16 and 17‑year‑olds, you're not going to change them. They are what they are.” That's why your curriculums and your education about bullying should go down to kindergarten, first and second grade. That's where the anti‑smoking bit has come in, where you get that kind of peer pressure. “Smoking is bad for you.” You see it on TV. You see it on programs, in health classes.

I think when you hit these kids in kindergarten, first, second, third, fourth, all the way up to 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th grade, that smoking is really bad and can have consequences, that's when you're going to see change down the road.

Schools with effective anti‑bullying programs have reduced bully by 50%. So I think to answer your question, so if you can get to these kids early… You still might have some that you have to talk to, you shouldn't pass that on, you're right, but it's going to have to start at an earlier age. The curriculum should be ongoing in the schools. It shouldn't be we had an anti‑bullying program, assembly on October 15th, we're done. It should be a curriculum. It should be part of the curriculum.

So, long story, longer. That's a good question. That's a good question. Did the anti smoking campaigns eradicate smoking? No. Have all the “don't drink and drive” campaigns eradicated people who drink and drive? No. We just had a person going the wrong way on the interstate, took out a couple and their 18‑month‑old child and she was pregnant with a second child. That drunk driver had several offenses. He lived but took out an entire family. So, if you can reduce it by a little bit, that's important.

Any other questions?

>> Participant: I have a question.

>> KATHY HATCH: Go ahead.

>> Participant: This is Ted, I'm part of the Southwestern Center for Independent Living in Marshall.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I've been there. I got relatives there.

>> Participant: We're good people. Anyway, my question is, I work with legislation on my job probably more than anything or at least as much as anything. My question for you is, in a practical way, it's one thing to contact a legislator, which I have done on this issue, in regard to things I've received on bullying, but you can send the email and make the call and talk to the legislative assistant but from there, I mean, a bill can have a lot of support as you I'm sure know and things can just go nowhere. So I'm wondering what are some, what's some advice you could give as far as what are the best things to do to try to expedite the process. If it has a law, it's got a law, something to work with. That's something. Now what more and how would you say, what are the key steps now in going forward to talk to them, to getting in the door?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Yeah, okay. You're from Minnesota so we know what happened this last legislative session. One thing happened, and only one thing happened. It was the sole mission of the legislature in Minnesota this session to pass a Vikings stadium bill. So the Vikings wouldn't move to L.A. or wherever.

The bullying bill got caught up in politics and so I think ‑‑ I know where it got hung in Minnesota. It got hung up in the two education committees. I've got their names and their addresses. And for once, you know ‑‑ they're going to get a “shame on you” letter from me. You know, what's it going to take? Is it going to take a death? It's like I’ve got something formulated, “Good policy should prevail over bad politics.” It's not a conservative issue, not a Republican or Democrat issue, it's a person level issue.

Sometimes if you look on the national level, there's good policy out there but if it's sponsored by one party, the other party is going to oppose it. That's what happened in Minnesota. It was proposed by the Attorney General who I talked to many times, who was from one party. The leadership of the legislature was from the other party. They weren't going to pass anything by the attorney general from the other party.

I know exactly what you're talking about. It got caught in politics. Now hopefully there's going to be an election in 2012, so these legislators will have a couple of years to breathe and maybe think of policy over politics. And I've already talked to the Attorney General and we're going to hit these people soon and do it again. And maybe we can hit them at the right time. Maybe politicians have a conscience. I hope they do. But I'm going to try and I hope you will too, try to hit them where their conscience is if you can.

Sometimes legislation ‑‑ and that's what happened in Minnesota this year, was politics over policy.

>> Participant: I have a question.

>> KATHY HATCH: Go ahead.

>> Participant: This is Alice from Roanoke.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I thought the Blue Ridge mountains were very pretty.

>> Participant: Thank you. So my question is: you mentioned earlier that bullying is about power. And I have heard that often bullies are themselves victims at home or otherwise. Could you speak to that?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Probably. It's like, you know, sexual perpetrators, sexual predators often have been sexually abused themselves and I think the young man that came and punched the kid with ADHD, the football you player came with those issues. And the little fifth grade girl, not surprising, her mom was a bully when she was in school. This was a small town and everybody knew the history. Probably the case. Or they watched mom or dad doing it. We've had parents whose kids are bullies and they say, “Hey, yeah, chip off the old block. Good thing he stands up for himself.”

As I mentioned, I gave a talk at a Native American reservation. This guy came up to me and says, “I've got a kid in 6th grade and he is getting picked on and he is in wrestling.” He said, “He had to wrestle in this town tournament against the kid that was bullying him.” He said the kid was scared to death. Dad told him, “Do the best you can, I'll be proud of you.” Low and behold, the kid being bullied went to the wrestling match. He won. He pinned the kid that was doing the bullying. That tribal officer was so proud of his child. He said, “You know that kid? I know the family and I know he is bullying my kid, but, that kid that was doing the bullying, he comes from just a terribly dysfunctional family.” So people know.

Often in the workplace, too. We see harassment in the workplace as a power kind of thing. Sometimes people who do intimidation in the workplace are often times people who may be being intimidated elsewhere in their life as well.

Yeah, the bully has often been bullied at home or seen some certain kinds of things, dysfunction in the home that causes them to do that. They may feel powerless at home. Maybe they're being beaten by their dad, whatever and they may come to school and lash out. Or like this football player, terrible dysfunction. I don't think his parents beat him, but I know on parents’ night for football, they never showed up. He walked on and off the field by himself, hung his head. But that's where he came from, too. He left that town. He graduated from high school, got a small football scholarship, put that town in his rear view mirror and never went back. Hope he is doing well.

>> Participant: I have a question, Tory from Massachusetts. You talked about the survey. Is that completed or being formulated?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: It should be on that  website that Kathy mentioned. I sent it in.

>> Participant: And I'm wondering does it include the form of bullying for intimidation?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Intimidation?

>> Participant: Yes.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I think so. It doesn't maybe use that word but I think if you looked at it, it talks about, you know, it's pretty comprehensive. So I don't know that exactly uses the word intimidation but I think it's implied in there. Yes.

>> Participant: If a child who is being bullied by their teacher, would it capture that for a child?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I think it does, who you're being bullied by, I think so. Let me look and see. It's been awhile since I looked at the survey.

>> Participant: I don't have it in front of me.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I'm thumbing through it now because I don't have it on my screen. It doesn't ‑‑ it's pretty general. Let's see. It does say other students but also talks about being embarrassed or threatened. So if you have been embarrassed or threatened by a teacher, it doesn't say specifically a teacher, but it doesn't say by other students. I would think a third or fourth grader wouldn't get by that or maybe a junior high student might pick that up and say hey, teacher.

>> Participant: I asked because my child was intimidated and threatened by his teacher this past year.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: You know something, I mentioned the one example with that, the kid with autism.

>> Participant: Thank you.

>> Participant: I'm calling from Grants Pass, Oregon.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Where is that? Near The Dells.

>> Participant: Way south. Southwestern Oregon, not too far from the coast near California. And you need to come visit out here if you think its beautiful back there.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Fine.

>> Participant: My question is, how many states have laws that include the victim of the bully?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Most of them with A‑plus‑plus ratings do.

>> Participant: Okay. I think they should have programs that would include counseling or something for the victim.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: That's what I said, the A‑plus‑plus states do. The one in North Dakota ‑‑ if I skipped over that, I shouldn't have. There're programs for the bully and programs for the student being bullied. A good comprehensive program should address both. Oregon –

>> Participant: We're an A rating, I wondered how many other states had the plus.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Ones with the double plus do both. If your state doesn't have the plus‑plus rating, it should. Montana got an F because they don't have one at all, although next lowest rated is Minnesota which is C minus. Look at your law, compare it to some of the A‑plus‑plus ones. Maybe states in your area that are similar size to you and see if you can see the difference. See if there's something your state needs to work on.

>> Participant: Great, thank you so much.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: You're welcome.

>> Participant: Mr. Johnson.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: My name is John, but that's okay, I'll answer.

>> Participant: I'm from North Dakota. I have a consumer, a former student and he would like to make a statement?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Sure, fine.

>> Participant: He is going make a statement.

>> Participant: I'm John, I have a paper statement. One, I kind of have been even in youth groups especially being made fun of from the situation he goes through and people not helping him and stuff and nobody's thinking about anybody but themselves. They go through situations that they don't like going through and stuff. And for social alienation. I'm talking about me, being left alone, being mistreated.

>> Participant: John, this is the voice of a student who has been abused ‑‑ bullied.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Abused is something a state could deal with, bullied is a little different.

>> Participant: Sure.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I didn't catch all he said, talking about going to different functions, anti‑bullying program should include the whole community, not just the schools. It's got to include your CIL, I know what CIL you're from. It's got to include the church community, the youth community, whether it's youth hockey or other kinds of youth activities, community, those sorts of things. A good program is all‑encompassing.

>> Participant: It's mainly a church‑y class, it's not the unreligious programs, what I meant is what kind of youth I meant is some kind of church thing.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I'm sorry, I didn't catch that all. All I heard was something with the church. Were you being bullied in church? Was the church a refuge?

>> Participant: A church youth thing. Kind of a youthful thing, nothing to do with anything ‑‑ a place for itself?

>> JOHN JOHNSON: I still ‑‑ I'm sorry, my speaker phone, I just, it doesn't pick up very well. Sorry.

>> Participant: He was just referring to a youth program that he attended. Where he was billed.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: That happens. Absolutely. Like I said, absolutely. And that should be brought to the attention of the youth leadership. They should be at the table in a community‑wide anti‑bullying program. Not just the schools.

>> Participant: Thank you, John.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: The responsibility of the CIL is to maybe facilitate that if the community is not doing that. In my opinion.

>> Participant: Yes. To take that on, I think John just wants to give a closing statement and then we'll be off.

>> Participant: I have had people who don't know who they're talking to, won't get to know somebody or they get in the stuff and they don't know what they're doing or who don't know what they're doing or don't know who they're talking to, people get into that stuff and they treat you like, you know, they think they know about you yet they don't know anything about you and they don't get to know you and that stuff and sometimes it just seem as if you can make more than one picture of certain abuse or being made fun of, those can be connected to bullying. It's likely to come up. You can bring up more than one thing.

>> JOHN JOHNSON: That's true. That happens, unfortunately. Like I said, that young lady that was perpetrated to have lice, who didn't have them, nobody got to know her. I think that's what you're saying, nobody got to know you. That happens unfortunately.

Kathy, we're over time, right?

>> KATHY HATCH: We are, we're at the 4:30 mark. If there are no other questions, I would like to say thank you to John very much. Did anybody have anything to close?

>> Participant: This is Rebecca for Freedom Resource Center. I had a quick question. I'm actually your neighbor to the south. My question is related to your work with the North Dakota bullying law that is in place. Does that leave each school responsible for developing their own anti‑bullying policy within the school as long as they provide the components in the law or is it across the board, you know, that's what is expected is what was in the law and that no school ‑‑

>> JOHN JOHNSON: Each school is an independent school district. By that, I mean each school develops its own policy. They take their lead from the community. So for example, in the larger communities obviously they're probably going to do what works for them. Their policy is going to be different from the one that I said was in this town of 63 students in grade the K through 12. The curriculum is going to be different. Their needs are different. In some of the small schools everybody knows everybody. In the larger schools they don't. So no, there's some flexibility and that's a good thing about this. That's a good thing about most laws of A‑plus‑plus states. They let each school determine their own. But the state says each district, each school must have this, this, this and this. They must have these certain components in there but how they do that is up to them. They don't tell you which curriculum to use. They don't tell you how many trainings teachers must have but they must have training. It's dictated by each community. You don't want a statewide thing. What's germane in Portland, Oregon, may not be germane in another city… in Eugene, for instance.

>> Participant: Thank you.

>> KATHY HATCH: Okay, I would like to say thank you all for being here today…John, especially you! That was a wonderful presentation. Again, I'd like to invite you to visit the APRIL website where you will find the documents discussed today and an archive copy plus a transcript of the presentations. Just go to [www.april‑rural.org](http://www.aprilrural.org) and look for IL conversations. If you have questions about today's discussion, you can reach me at kathatch@charter.net . Thanks.

This IL conversation is presented by the IL‑net which is operated by the independent living research utilization program at TIRR Memorial Hermann partnership with the NCIL and APRIL. Support for the presentation was provided by the United States Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. No official endorsement of the Department of Education should be inferred.

So again, thanks everybody and goodbye and have a great afternoon.

-- End of transcript --