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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICIES, TRAINING AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM IN THE EDUCATIONAL SETTING: A SURVEY OF OKLAHOMA MIDDLE LEVEL PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, COUNSELORS AND TEACHERS

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

LINDA GILES DZIALO
Norman, Oklahoma
1999

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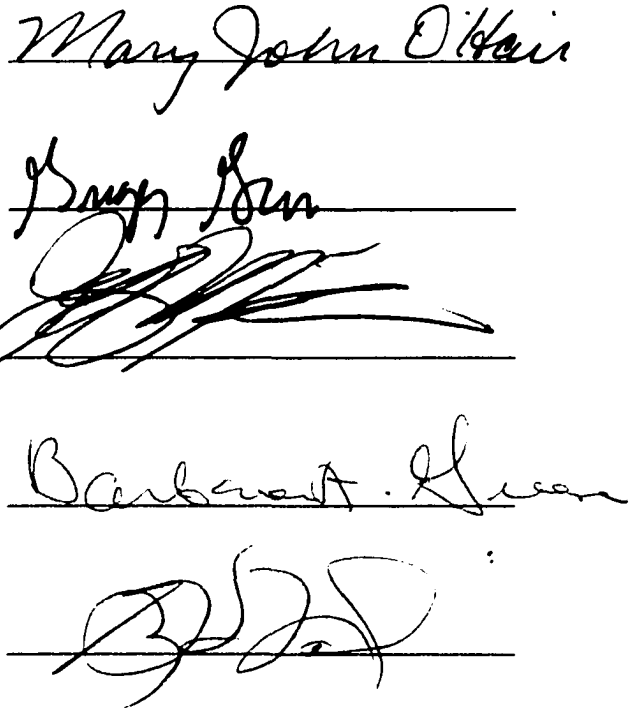
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A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY



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ABSTRACT

Research shows that our young people pay an academic and emotional price for the hostile situations produced by sexual harassment. The purpose of this study was: (1) To determine if Oklahoma's middle schools have established sexual harassment policies and to investigate the policy's documentation and, (2) To determine if Oklahoma's middle schools are providing sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. Five research questions guided the study.

A survey instrument mailed to 155 Oklahoma middle school principals, 188 middle school counselors and 160 middle school teachers provided the data for this study. Descriptive data about the respondents' middle schools and school districts provided the background. Largely a rural state, Oklahoma has a wide range of school district size, school size as well as grade configurations used to define a middle school. Data indicated that over 89% of Oklahoma's middle school educators report that their school had a sexual harassment policy and 45% of the respondents indicated that their school provided sexual harassment awareness and prevention training.

Three separate one way ANOVAs examined the relationship between the kind of educator (principal, counselor and teacher), size of the school district and school size with the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem. There were significant mean differences between the kind of educator and the perception of the problem, as well as the size of district and school. Teachers perceived the sexual harassment problem as larger than the counselors and principals. Also studied with

three additional one way ANOVAs was the kind of educator, school district size and school size with the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy.

A chi-square analysis of the relationship between the school district size and school size with the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training revealed significant pair-wise differences. Large districts and large schools were more likely than expected to have a sexual harassment policy as well as an awareness and prevention training component.

Qualitative data recorded in the survey by the middle school principals, counselors and teachers are included in the study, along with a grouping, coding and analysis of the narratives. In addition, the data from a 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study with 249 of Oklahoma's 547 school district superintendents as respondents was compared. The superintendents' mean perception of the sexual harassment problem was significantly less than the principals, counselors and teachers of this study. This reinforced the current study data that the further the respondent is removed from the classroom and the student. the lower the mean perception of the problem. The middle school teachers, closest in proximity to the students, rated the problem of sexual harassment the highest. The relationship between the two studies' data reveal several similar patterns regarding the school district size and the existence of sexual harassment policies and training.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Statement of the Problem

Student-to-student sexual harassment is a daily occurrence in almost every school in the United States (AAUW, 1993; Shakeshaft, Mandel, Johnson, Sawyer, Hergenrother, & Barber, 1997; Turner, 1995). Adolescent boys and girls are regularly subjected to both verbal and physical sexual harassment at the hands of their peers. Research shows that our young people pay an academic and emotional price for these hostile situations. While laws prohibiting such harassment have been in effect for more than three decades, the "boys will be boys" mentality still prevails in many communities. Only when the courts became involved, in the mid-1980's, and victims sought justice through litigation, did society begin to focus on the serious nature of this problem.

Researchers have conducted surveys at the school, regional, state and national levels to determine the magnitude of the problem for school children (AAUW, 1993; Kraus, 1996; Pera, 1996; Permanent Commission, 1995). Social scientists have also conducted legal studies, exploring the laws and court cases which pertain to educational institutions (Berlin, 1996; Otuwa, 1997; Vanderlinden, 1993). Students have completed questionnaires, surveys and writing prompts. Answers in these studies have been tallied and categorized.

These surveys demonstrate that student-to-student sexual harassment is far more common than we would like to believe. According to a national survey commissioned by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 81% of students in grades 8 - 11 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in school (AAUW, 1993). In January of 1995, the Connecticut Permanent Commission on the Status of Women released "In Our Own Backyard: Sexual Harassment in Connecticut's Public High Schools" (Permanent Commission, 1995). More than 78% of 500 randomly selected male and female students, in grades 10 through 12, reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual harassment in high school. A study conducted in four of New Jersey's middle schools found between 72% of the students at one school to 42% of the young adolescents at another school self identifying as victims of sexual harassment (Cozine, 1998). Each of these studies supports findings that sexual harassment of students is happening at an alarming rate. Survey-focused research has documented that a problem exists in our schools.

When given a chance to respond to questionnaires in publications commonly read by young people, students speak in a clear voice (Griffith, 1996). While the surveys and questionnaires of these popular lay publications are nonscientific, they do tell a story about the experiences of these young people. In a write-in survey by *USA Weekend,* printed in their September 6 - 8, 1996 issue, three out of four teens responding had experienced sexual harassment (defined as anything from touching to being mooned) (Pera, 1996). In the September 1992 issue of *Seventeen* magazine

thousands of preteen and teenage girls, responding to two open-ended questions about sexual harassment at school in a self-report survey, described their deep feelings of desperation and abandonment (LeBlanc, 1992). Their narrations told of horrifying situations in which students often felt betrayed by the school personnel who did nothing to stop or prevent the harassment.

In the school setting, peer sexual harassment greatly affects the learning ability and sense of well being of many young people (Till, 1980). Victims of harassment suffer educationally, emotionally and behaviorally. These adolescent victims report in questionnaires an inability to concentrate on classroom activities, not wanting to talk in class, an actual dread of coming to school and in some cases a desire to change schools. A drastic drop in grades, increase in absences and dropping out of school can result from peer sexual harassment. Victims often feel embarrassed, self-conscious and afraid. They make great effort to avoid individuals, particular places at school, or even the path used to come or go home from school (AAUW, 1993). One high school teacher describes the effect sexual harassment has on young people:

> Victims of sexual harassment are controlled out of shame, anger and fear. They feel helpless and isolated. They lose their self-confidence, self-worth and freedom of expression. Fearing more harassment, they're afraid to speak up and may not even report what is happening to them.
>
> Many victims become silent and withdrawn. They may stop participating in school or have difficulty concentrating in class. To avoid their harassers, they may avoid certain classes, switch schedules, or even switch schools. One student of mine was so incessantly harassed at her former school that she needed psychological therapy and eventually transferred to our school, driving an extra hour each day, just to escape the harassment.
>
> Some victims may refuse to come to school at all. Others may give up

> emotional problems as well. In extreme cases, they may contemplate or even attempt suicide. (Lengel, 1997, p. 247)

Researchers have written extensively on the preventive steps that school districts should take in order to establish an environment where student-to-student sexual harassment is not acceptable. Studies describe exemplary training programs for students, faculty and administrators (Webb, Hunnicutt, & Metha, 1997). It is the moral and legal responsibility of school administrators, staff and faculty to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment for all students. Furthermore, the courts have established that principals may be found liable if they fail, through deliberate indifference, to fulfill their duty to protect employees and students (Gluckman, 1996).

Currently, little is known about the preventive measures that Oklahoma's schools are taking. No information is available regarding the number of districts or schools currently with an approved sexual harassment policy. This researcher could not discover how many districts or schools printed the sexual harassment policy and then distributed it to administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents. There is no record of how many Oklahoma public school districts or schools actually conduct sexual harassment prevention training sessions for administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents. Also lacking is information regarding the perception of the problem by the school district superintendents, principals, counselors and teachers, or these educators' perception of the effectiveness of the existing sexual harassment policy if one exists. In summary, little is known about the reaction of Oklahoma public school educators to the national surveys revealing the prevalence of student-to-student sexual

harassment. Information is needed about whether Oklahoma's schools are taking the necessary steps to protect the safety of the children and to protect their district and themselves from liability.

Background of the Problem

Sexual harassment is a hot topic of the 1990's. In 1991 the nation was shocked when Dr. Frances Conley, renowned neurosurgeon, resigned from Stanford University with charges of twenty-five years of "gender insensitivity." Just a few months later Anita Hill testified that U.S. Supreme Court nominee Judge Clarence Thomas engaged in inappropriate sexual behavior thus creating a hostile work environment. Millions of Americans viewed the U.S. Senate hearing investigating this sexual harassment claim. Many U.S. citizens also followed the Navy's 1992 Tailhook controversy in which female sailors were groped by their male counterparts. Paula Jones' sexual harassment suit against President Bill Clinton dominated the headlines from 1995 to 1998. All of these high profile cases, however, address sexual harassment in the work place. Sexual harassment exists in schools as well, but not just among the adults. Student-to-student sexual harassment is a pervasive problem in schools all over the country. Informed educators know that sexual harassment now extends to peer, as well as adult to student, conduct in our nation's schools.

Sexual harassment is not a new concept. Recent laws and court cases have

brought its existence and the use of the term "sexual harassment" to the center of our attention. Events of the past decade have brought sexual harassment issues to the door of the school. Some brief explanations of these laws, and the agencies charged with administering them, follow.

Both quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment are recognized forms of discrimination by the Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Title VII prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion or sex. Title VII specifically defines sexual harassment as a form of discrimination based on gender. This type of discrimination is enforced by the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions (EEOC). The EEOC has issued numerous guidelines which help shape the prohibitions against sexual harassment. Several of their documents include "EEOC Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex" (1980), "EEOC Policy Guidance on Employer Liability Under Title VII for Sexual Favoritism" (1990), "EEOC Policy Guidance on Current Issues of Sexual Harassment" (1990) and "EEOC Enforcement Guidance on Compensatory and Punitive Damages Available Under 102 of the Civil Rights Act of 1991" (1992).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 also explicitly prohibits sex discrimination in all educational institutions receiving federal funding. Title IX covers both employees and students of public and private institutions of higher education and public elementary and secondary schools. All programs of the institution are covered. Unless they receive federal funds, private schools are not covered. Sexual harassment,

both quid pro quo and hostile environment, is also considered a form of gender discrimination under Title IX. The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the United States Department of Education enforces Title IX.

The Office for Civil Rights is responsible for ensuring that educational institutions which receive assistance from the federal government comply with Title IX. The OCR defines sexual harassment as:

> verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, imposed on the basis of sex, by an employee or an agent of an institution that denies, limits, provides different, or conditions the provision of aid, benefits, services, or treatment protected under Title IX. (Department of Education, 1997)

The OCR usually responds to complaints of sexual harassment with a "Letter of Finding" (LOF). In March 1997, the OCR released guidance on peer sexual harassment. OCR's letter set forth clear standards and practices that have governed the investigation and resolution of OCR cases involving claims of peer harassment (Department of Education, 1997). The OCR guidance states:

> a school will be liable for the conduct of its students that create a sexually hostile environment where (i) a hostile environment exists, (ii) the school knows ('has notice') of the harassment, and (iii) the school fails to take immediate and appropriate steps to remedy it (Department of Education, 1997).

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 creates private and public institutional liability for the acts of supervisors and employees which constitute sexual harassment of employees. It allows for damages for emotional distress and punitive damages. This Act literally amends Title VII by overturning seven decisions handed down by the Supreme Court between 1989 and 1991 (Sandler, 1994). The act also extends coverage

of Title VII to American-owned companies and educational institutions that operate overseas (Sandler, 1994). In addition, the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution states that students and employees in public institutions may be able to bring a sexual harassment suit against an employer under the Equal Protection Clause.

These laws and agencies lay the ground work and parameters for the legal ramifications of sexual harassment. They provide the directives cited during court cases publicized in the daily newspapers, magazines and on the television evening news. They are the focus of sexual harassment cases that have taken a center stage as our society attempts to deal with this sensitive issue.

Sexual harassment in many cases involves behavior that has in the past been accepted by many as normal.

> Student-to-student sexual harassment can be inappropriate visual, verbal and/or physical conduct. Examples of such harassment that happen in schools include attempts to snap bras, grope at other's bodies, pull down gym shorts, or flip up skirts; circulating 'summa cum slutty' or 'piece of ass of the week' lists; designating special weeks for 'grabbing the private parts of girls;' nasty, personalized graffiti written on bathroom walls; sexualized jokes, taunts, and skits that mock girls' bodies performed at school-sponsored pep rallies, assemblies, or half-time performances during sporting events; and outright physical assault and even rape in schools. (Stein, 1993)

The legal definition of sexual harassment is continually evolving through legislation, the courts and the actions of federal agencies.

> In a nutshell, any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors and other verbal or physical sexual conduct is considered sexual harassment when the victim must submit to the conduct as a term or condition of employment, or the conduct unreasonably interferes with the victim's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment. (Shepard & Mason, 1993)

Simply stated, sexual harassment in the educational setting is unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity.

According to the booklet Teens and Sexual Harassment (1994), used to train secondary students on student-to-student sexual harassment, such behaviors are exemplified by grabbing or touching someone, especially his or her sexual parts, tearing or pulling at a person's clothing, purposely bumping or rubbing against a person, kissing or holding a person against his or her will, impeding a person's movements or preventing a person from moving freely, comments about body parts or rating people's bodies, sexual suggestions or threats, spreading sexual rumors or stories, sexual jokes, using sexual orientation (homosexuality or bisexuality) as an insult, staring or pointing at a person's body or body parts, making obscene gestures, displaying obscene sexual material or placing it in someone's locker or on someone's computer, and writing people's names along with sexual remarks, suggestions, or drawings in public places (Business and Legal Reports, 1994).

Need for the Study

Regional, state and national surveys document the problem of sexual harassment in schools. In the surveys, the harassment victims allude to the impact of these hostile behaviors on their day-to-day activities. Sexual harassment has a negative

impact on the ability to learn by our country's young people. Students report not wanting to go to school, not wanting to talk in class, an inability to concentrate at school, finding it hard to study, making lower grades and wanting to change schools as a result of sexual harassment (AAUW, 1993).

It is critical that school districts across our country become aware of the destructive nature of sexual harassment. School districts must develop strategies, policies and procedures to prevent the occurrence of sexual harassment. Furthermore, since the seventh grade is the grade at which the largest number of students first experience sexual harassment, this problem must be addressed at the middle school level (AAUW, 1993). The task at hand, therefore, is to determine if these policies and training sessions are taking place in Oklahoma's middle level schools. This study, through a survey completed by principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools, sought to determine the status of these policies and training sessions. In addition, the researcher inquired about the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem and the effectiveness of any existing sexual harassment policies from the perspective of the middle level principals, counselors and teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine how many Oklahoma middle level schools currently have a sexual harassment policy, where that policy is documented and

to whom that policy is dispersed. The researcher sought information about what sexual harassment prevention training sessions exist, who is trained, and who provides the training. Data obtained records the middle level principal, counselor or teacher's perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem at the respondents' schools and the educators' perception of the effectiveness of existing policies. This study also examined the relationship between data from middle level educators from large, medium and small school districts and schools regarding the existence of a sexual harassment policy and the provision of sexual harassment training. Finally, the relationship between this study's data and a 1998 pilot study of Oklahoma superintendents was examined.

It is well documented that student-to-student sexual harassment is a daily occurrence in our nation's schools. Severe consequences that affect life decisions can result from this victimization of students. School districts have a moral obligation to establish safe environments and positive school climates. This study documented the steps being taken by Oklahoma's middle level school personnel to prevent sexual harassment in the educational setting.

Research Questions

In order to achieve the purposes of this study, it is necessary to answer several important questions.

1. What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle level schools currently has a sexual harassment policy? In what documents is the policy printed?
2. What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle schools currently provides sexual harassment awareness and prevention training? Who receives and provides the training?
3. What is the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem by the principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools? How does that perception compare with the nationally documented magnitude of the problem? How does that perception vary based on whether that educator is a middle level principal, counselor or teacher? In addition, how does that perception vary among educators from small, medium and large districts and schools? How does the perception of the effectiveness of an existing sexual harassment policy vary among middle level principals, counselors and teachers from small, medium and large school districts and schools?
4. How does the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training vary as reported by educators from small, medium and large districts and schools?
5. What is the relationship between the data collected from the

study and the 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study data collected from 249 superintendents of Oklahoma's 547 school districts?

Assumptions

The study was conducted within the boundaries of the following assumptions:

1. The middle school educators responding to the survey were aware of the existence of a sexual harassment policy and/or training.
2. The middle level principals, counselors and teachers responding to the survey were aware of the number of incidents of sexual harassment in their school.
3. The middle level principals, counselors and teachers responding to the survey were honest about their perception of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment in their school and of the effectiveness of their school's sexual harassment policy.
4. The middle level principals, counselors and teachers responding to the survey were representative of all of the principals, counselors and teachers and their middle level schools in the state of Oklahoma.
5. If a respondent reported their school as having a sexual harassment policy, the school is addressing the issue in a meaningful way.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study will provide useful information for Oklahoma State Department of Education officials, school administrators, teachers and counselors as they strive to free Oklahoma's schools of sexual harassment. This study will provide a baseline of information for state educators to assess the current status of Oklahoma's attempt to address this pervasive problem. This information can encourage school leaders to take positive steps to recognize the problem and take steps to prevent its occurrence.

Definitions of Terms

Hostile Environment- Any unwelcome sexually oriented conduct or atmosphere that is so severe or pervasive that it is intimidating or offensive to a "reasonable person" of the same gender as the victim. Usually this involves a course of conduct rather than a single event (McGrath, 1993).

Middle School- A school which serves early adolescent students and usually includes several grades between grade five to nine

Quid Pro Quo- Latin for "that for this" or "something for something" and describes a situation in which acquiescence to a certain sexual behavior could affect the job or grade, if in a school setting

School personnel- School administrators, teachers, counselors, as well as support employees such as custodians, cooks and secretaries

Sexual Harassment- Unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity (McGrath, 1993).

Target of sexual harassment- Any student identified as having been the recipient of unwelcome or unwanted behavior of a sexual nature

Victim of sexual harassment- Any student identified as having been the recipient of unwelcome or unwanted behavior of a sexual nature

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted within the parameters of several limitations.

1. The survey was sent to a random sample of middle school principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's 311 middle level public schools.
2. Only basic questions were asked. For example, in answering "Yes" to the question about the existence of a sexual harassment policy, that could range from a single statement in the school board policy book to a detailed policy for both employees and students which involved committees in the writing and implementation and widespread dispersement to all students and employees of the school.

3. The principals, counselors or teachers might not have been fully aware of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment in their schools.
4. The gender of the respondent principals, counselors and teachers was not indicated on the survey instrument. This factor may account for some of the variance in responses.

Chapter Summary

The psychological, emotional and educational toll that sexual harassment takes on it victims has been well documented in numerous surveys (AAUW, 1993; Pera, 1996; Kraus, 1996; Turner, 1995). These surveys show that the sexual harassment in schools is far more common than we would like to believe. Schools have an obligation to take steps to prevent such harassment.

Little is known regarding the steps that middle level schools of Oklahoma are taking to establish policies and provide sexual harassment awareness and prevention training for the students, faculty and parents. This study, through a survey administered to middle level principals, counselors and teachers, gathered data on the existence of a sexual harassment policy and to whom the policy is given in Oklahoma's middle level schools. In addition, this study provides information about the sexual harassment training provided to middle level school students, school personnel and parents. The relationship between school and district size and the existence of policies

and training are examined. The relationship between the kind of educator, school and district size, and the perception of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment and the perception of the effectiveness of the policy are also studied.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Definitions of Sexual Harassment

The impact and scope of sexual harassment are continually evolving through legislation, the courts and federal agencies. Even the definition of sexual harassment is difficult to establish. The most frequently cited definition of sexual harassment is one established in 1980 by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) as a violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. According to the document "Guidelines on Discrimination Because of Sex," revised by the EEOC in 1980, sexual harassment is:

> unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment (or education), submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment (or educational) decisions affecting such individual or such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working (or educational) environment. (Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, 1980, p. 3)

Bogart & Stein (1987) provide a simplified version of this definition:

> Sexual harassment may involve overt actions as extreme as physical threats, sexual assault and rape, as well as subtle interactions which communicate condescension, hostility, or invisibility. It may be expressed in verbal comments, jabs, innuendos of a sexual nature, as well as in nonverbal communications such as suggestive looks or unwanted touching. Psychological

> as well as physical in its power over others, sexual harassment may exert control through disapproval or rejection as well as through the use of physical strength to overcome or subdue an individual. (Bogart & Stein, 1987, p. 148)

There is a continuum of behaviors from leering, ogling and off-color jokes to assault, threats and coercion (Yaffe, 1995). Sexual harassment often contains an element of power or control by one person over another. It is always unwelcome and unwanted by the victim. The courts have established that sexual harassment is unlawful discrimination based on sex. Title VII makes such discrimination an unlawful employment practice and Title IX of the 1972 Education Acts makes sexual harassment an unlawful educational practice.

There are two distinct forms of sexual harassment: quid pro quo and hostile environment. The distinction between the two is not always clear and sometimes the two forms of harassment occur together. Black's Law Dictionary (1990) defines quid pro quo as "something for something." This acquiescence to a certain sexual behavior could affect the job or grade, if in a school setting. Quid pro quo sexual harassment occurs when submission to the conduct is made a term or condition of one's employment or educational program, submission to or rejection of the conduct is used to affect advancement, assigned duties, career development or educational programs, or submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for any employment or educational decision regarding services, honors, assignments, programs or activities available (McGrath, 1993). The essential feature of this type of harassment is the use of power and the possibility of an available reprisal that can be used by the

superordinate against the subordinate. A student or adult who withholds and/or promises a benefit for the exchange of sexual favors would be guilty. In the case of an employee, these reprisals may include a failure to promote the employee; disapproval of travel or training requests; negative performance evaluations; and actual dismissal. When a student is involved, the reprisals may include lowering of a course grade; disapproval of a graduate project; poor recommendations for advanced study; and, failure to approve a final thesis or dissertation, thus, denying the degree (Shoop, 1992). Even students can initiate quid pro quo sexual harassment behavior. An example would be the editor of the yearbook promising staff positions or extra pictures in the annual in exchange for sexual favors.

The second and most prevalent form of sexual harassment is hostile environment sexual harassment. Usually this involves a course of conduct rather than a single event. This form of sexual harassment is more intangible, less discrete and often occurs over a period of time (Shoop, 1992). Any unwelcome sexually oriented conduct or atmosphere that is so severe or pervasive that it is intimidating or offensive to a "reasonable person" of the same gender as the victim can be construed as hostile environment sexual harassment (McGrath, 1993). In order to prove that a hostile environment was created causing a substantial job or educational detriment, the victim must substantiate that there were multiple and varied combinations of offensive behavior occurring over a period of time.

> The five elements which generally comprise sexual discrimination based on the existence of a hostile work environment are; (1) the victim must belong to a

protected category, i.e. the plaintiff is harassed solely on the basis of her sex; (2) the plaintiff must be subject to unwelcome sexual harassment, i.e., the plaintiff must not have solicited or incited the offensive behavior, and the employee must regard the conduct as undesirable or offensive; (3) the harassment complained of was based upon sex, i.e. behavior is disproportionately more offensive or demeaning to one sex; (4) harassment complained of must affect term, condition or privilege of employment, i.e., the harassment must be sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter condition of employment and create abusive working environment; and (5) the defendants knew or should have known of the harassment and failed to take prompt, effective remedial action, i.e., Title VII works to hold responsible those who control aspects of employment. (Shoop, 1992)

Theories of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination based largely on gender. Several theories and explanatory models have emerged during the last two decades to explain its existence. All of these theories, however, deal with sexual harassment in the workplace with adults. There has been little research dealing with this topic as it relates to the interactions of young people in a school setting.

Sexual harassment has more to do with power than with sex (Collier & Holmes, (1989). In the workplace sexual harassment is a form of economic coercion that preserves unequal power and weakens competition coming from the growing work experience of women. The power constructs that sexual harassment elicits trace back to the Stone Age warriors (Collier & Holmes, 1989). Sexual harassment reaffirms the social view of women as helpmates or handmaidens, and men as the politically powerful group who create the values and rules for all. Because women generally play

subordinate roles in employment (with education as a primary example), and their economic fate is controlled by male superiors, sexual harassment can occur. (MacKinnon, 1979)

> The term sexual harassment refers to the intimidation of persons in subordinate positions by those holding power and authority over them in order to exact sexual favors that would ordinarily not have been granted. Sexual harassment of male subordinates by female superiors is conceivable, and probably occurs, albeit infrequently. Positions of authority are more likely to be occupied by males, while women are predominately relegated to positions of subservience and dependency. Furthermore, strong cultural patterns induce female sexual passivity and acquiescence to male initiative. These factors combine to produce a dominant pattern of male harassment of females. However, it might be reflecting the poisoning of the work environment that may result from sexual intimidation that may affect members of both sexes, so that sexual harassment should be viewed as more than merely a woman's issue. (May & Hughes, 1992)

Several explanatory models for sexual harassment in the work place explore the concept of power.

Organizational Model

One of the predominate theories of power and sexual harassment is the Organizational Model. The Organizational Model attempts to analyze sexual harassment in the work place, yet it has application to the educational setting as well. The theory behind the Organizational Model suggests that business, institutions, schools and other places of work create a prime opportunity for sexual harassment to flourish. The vertical stratification provides an environment in which subordinate employees or students report to bosses or teachers. Since women have only recently

entered the job market in great numbers, in those settings they are more likely to hold subordinate positions. This sets up the opportunity for harassment (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson,1992).

The lower the victim is on the organizational structure, the less power she commands. This often results in a desperation to keep her job or to remain in school. In addition to levels of power, other factors that contribute are the visibility of women in sex-integrated institutions, the ratio of males to females in the environment, occupationally-defined behavioral norms, individual job tasks and requirements, and the availability of both grievance procedures and job alternatives (Burke-Kelly, 1998).

The ratio of males to females in any organization can also facilitate or inhibit sexual harassment. The visibility of women, whether they work alone, in pairs, or in groups, as well as the ratio of males to females in any organizational circumstance can increase the likelihood of sexual harassment (Burke-Kelly, 1998). The greater visibility of tokens, and newcomer status, may make them scapegoats for the dominant group's frustration (Tangri & Johnson, 1992). Organizational norms such as the types of uniforms worn can also facilitate sexual harassment. Tasks such as overtime and business trips may invite conflicts. Employees or students with access to grievance procedures or the possibility of transferring to a different job or class are less likely to tolerate sexual harassment (Burke-Kelly, 1998).

The Organizational Model creates an environment in which sexual harassment may be used to intimidate or control subordinates, which can result in loss of

occupational or educational mobility for the victim (Burke-Kelly, 1998). This model of organization can lead to sexual aggression and discrimination (Tangri et al, 1992).

Sociocultural Model

The Sociocultural Model is also based on the unequal distribution of power. This model is based upon a patriarchal system in which men rule and cultural and social beliefs are normed in order to legitimize their power (Burke-Kelly, 1998). Male dominance is affirmed through economic superiority and the well established patterns of male-female interaction. Women are rewarded for passivity and men are rewarded for dominance and sexual aggression. According to this model, the purpose of sexual harassment is to reinforce male-female behavioral norms and to preserve male dominance in the work force (Burke-Kelly, 1998). The result of this socialization is to intimidate, discourage or remove women from the work or higher education environment (Tangri et al, 1992).

Sex-role Spillover Model

The Sex-role Spillover Model also deals with sexual harassment in the workplace (Guteck & Morasch, 1982). This theory addresses situations where women are in the minority and are, thus, treated in a more stereotypical way. In this situation,

more sexual harassment is expected. The sex-role spillover occurs whenever the ratio of males to females is skewed in either direction. In work situations dominated by women, for example, nursing or elementary school teaching, women are victimized by sex-role spillover because the job itself has assumed the feminine sex-role characteristics of being helpful, supportive, nurturing, etc.; therefore, men expect women holding such jobs to behave in certain ways consistent with their impressions of the work being done (Gutek, 1985). Conversely, women who are outnumbered by men on the job, for example, construction workers or upper management, tend to be seen as "women" first and as "workers" second. In this case, because their gender is so evident by the scarcity of their numbers, sex-role spillover occurs (Gutek, 1985).

The essence of this model is that the hierarchical nature of organizations allows for the misuse of authority or power by either men or women. Women, however, who tend to occupy lesser positions of power, have been the more frequent victims (Rosen, 1994). Organizational power, in particular, may lead to quid pro quo harassment, because the offender has something to give or withhold (Gutek, 1985; Stockdale, 1993).

An off-shoot of the Sex-roll Spillover model is the feminist view, which also decries an unequal base of power and status between the sexes (Rosen, 1994; Shoop,1992). Males are allowed the sexual prerogative, and the expectation is that females will be deferential. Sexual harassment serves to maintain the power imbalance; thus protecting the sexual advantages enjoyed by men (Chamberlain, 1994). A large

body of literature has addressed sexual harassment as an extension of feminist theories of sex discrimination (Dzeich & Weiner, 1984; Hoffmann, 1986). This view is often the basis for laws against sexual harassment. Feminism also views sexual harassment as a form of male sexual violence (Fitzgerald, 1993). The similarities noted between rape and sexual harassment have included: a power imbalance that feeds on women's fears and vulnerabilities; the habitual nature of the behavior of many offenders; cultural myths such as "woman as seductress"; a belief that these things only happen among the lower classes; a reflection of sex role distinctions of the male as predator and the female as object; victims' reactions; and the function of both to maintain women in a subordinate position (Fitzgerald, 1990; Quina, 1990).

Sexual harassment in the work setting is a societal problem that our country continues to wrestle with and attempt to address. In 1990, Margaret Mead, renowned anthropologist, made the following comment about sexual harassment in the work setting:

> What should we do-what can we- do about sexual harassment on the job?.... As I see it, it isn't more laws that we need now, but new taboos....we need something....pervasive, a climate of opinion that includes men as well as women, and that will affect not only adult relations and behavior on the job but also the expectations about the adult world that guide our children's progress into that world. (Dziech & Weiner, 1990)

Sexual Harassment and the Law

An analysis of applicable laws, federal guidelines and case law demonstrates the complexity of the issues surrounding sexual harassment. It is an area of law that is continually growing as the courts attempt to further define sexual harassment and shape the parameters of the liability issues. Several major laws and agencies govern the majority of sexual harassment issues. Court rulings provide guidance in the application and interpretation of those laws.

Title IX and the Office for Civil Rights

Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments prohibits sex discrimination in educational institutions receiving federal funding. Title IX states that "no person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Discrimination under Title IX includes sexual harassment and includes both employees and students. Sexual harassment, both quid pro quo and hostile environment, is considered a form of gender discrimination under Title IX.

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is responsible for ensuring that educational institutions which receive assistance from the federal government comply with Title IX.

In March 1997, the Office for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education issued "Sexual Harassment Guidance: Harassment of Students by School Employees, Other Students, or Third Parties." The guidelines help school districts to determine their liability for sexual harassment situations. The OCR guidelines apply Title VII case law and agency standards to Title IX. Employees or students who have been sexually harassed in the educational setting have three options to file a complaint under Title IX. They can file a complaint at their school, file a complaint directly with the Office for Civil Rights or file a civil lawsuit.

Originally Title IX was not interpreted to provide monetary relief. That changed with the landmark case Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools (1992). Taking the stand that injunctive relief to stop discriminatory practices was inadequate in many cases and did not help make the victim whole, the U.S. Supreme Court determined monetary damages are available for violations of Title IX. Additional court cases are currently formulating instances in which money damages are available and can be levied against a school district and its supervisors as a result of sexual harassment.

Title VII and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

Both quid pro quo and hostile environment sexual harassment are recognized forms of discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (EEOC, 1980). Title VII prohibits an employer from discrimination in employment on the basis

of sex, race, color, religion or national origin with respect to hiring, discharge, compensation, promotion, classification, training, apprenticeship, referral for employment, or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment. Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VII led to the establishment of the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, EEOC.

Since 1972, public schools are also liable under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII). The purpose of Title VII is to protect employees against previously mentioned discrimination involving the employment relationship. Title VII states sexual harassment as a form of discrimination based on gender (Seligman, 1993). Both the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission and the Office for Civil Rights provide guidelines detailing what constitutes sexual harassment, what steps and measures must be taken to eradicate sexual harassment and what liabilities are incurred by institutions.

14th Amendment and Civil Rights Act of 1991

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution provides that students and employees in public institutions may be able to bring sexual harassment suit against an employer under the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 creates private and public institutional liability for the acts of

supervisors and employees which constitute sexual harassment of employees. In addition, there are numerous state laws and federal guidelines which govern discrimination.

Liability for Sexual Harassment in the Educational Setting

Liability for sexual harassment in education is a rapidly developing area of law. In the school setting quid pro quo harassment could be applied to situations such as the principal harassing a teacher, a teacher harassing a student, and even student-to-student situations. In all these cases the school can be found liable. School districts may be strictly liable for teacher-student sexual abuse. A federal district court in Texas ruled that in a Title IX suit against a school district for a teacher's sexual abuse of a student, strict liability principles impute the teacher's acts to the school district (West's, 1995). In hostile environment cases an employer is directly liable for the creation of a hostile environment by a supervisor or fellow employee if the employer knew or had reason to know of the sexual harassment and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.

School districts may be liable to their students for sexual harassment by other students. In the school setting, even if supervisors/principals may not be held vicariously liable for the actions of the sexual harassment perpetrator, their own direct acts of omissions may form the basis for liability. In other words, governmental

immunity may not always protect school officials. Principals may be found liable if they fail, through 'deliberate indifference,' to fulfill the duty they owe to protect employees and students. This personal liability will exist if the student proves that the school official received notice of a pattern of improper acts, demonstrated deliberate indifference, failed to take sufficient remedial actions and this failure caused injury to the employee or student.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's published guidelines to staff members who investigate complaints of unlawful discrimination in the workplace state that employers can minimize their liability for the wrongful conduct of their employees, including their supervisory and managerial personnel, with respect to unlawful sexual harassment, if they publish a written policy prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace and if the policy contains a procedure whereby employees can address their complaints regarding sexual harassment with company personnel other than their supervisors (Nobile, 1993). The National Association of Secondary School Principals publishes a monthly newsletter entitled "Cases in Point." In the September 1996 issue, one article updated administrators on the issue of school liability for sexual abuse of students. Sexual abuse of students continues to be the source of considerable litigation with a number of recent decisions adding to the case law being developed, if not to the clarity of that law (Gluckman, 1996). In addition to citing significant cases, Gluckman cautions administrators that they may be liable for conduct amounting to "deliberate indifference" to a student's constitutional right to be safe from such misconduct.

Landmark Cases on Sexual Harassment and Schools

There are clear conflicts between OCR's Guidance and recent Title IX sexual harassment case law, especially in regard to liability standards. The federal courts continue to wade through the issue of sexual harassment to determine a school district's standard of liability when failing to appropriately respond to a student's complaint of sexual harassment. Most sexual harassment cases arise in the context of harassment in the workplace. The courts, however, have repeatedly said that there is no meaningful distinction between the work environment and the school environment that would forbid such discrimination in the former context and tolerate it in the latter (Marczely, 1993). Although hundreds of court cases dealing with sexual harassment have been logged during the last twenty-five years, seven cases are particularly relevant for public schools. Some of the cases pertain to student-to-student harassment and others are adult-to-student situations. Each of these cases, however, is a milestone in the litigation of sexual harassment in the educational setting.

Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools

The case of Franklin v. Gwinnett County Public Schools (1992) brought Title IX to the forefront of public school civil rights litigation. Christine Franklin stated that in 1986 an economics teacher at North Gwinnett High School in suburban Atlanta

approaching her with sexually suggestive remarks. The alleged harassment continued over a period of 15 months, Franklin asserted. It included sexually-oriented conversations, forced kisses and phone calls. On three occasions in her junior year, the defendent interrupted another class and requested that the teacher excuse Franklin, whereupon he took her to a private office and subjected her to coercive sexual intercourse. Franklin further alleged in her complaint that the teachers and administrators became aware of the teacher's sexual harassment of Franklin and other female students and that they took no action to halt the abuse and tried to dissuade Franklin from pressing charges.

At the time, the district had no formal policy for reporting or investigating sexual harassment. Eventually an investigation took place that led to the teacher's resignation (Murdock & Kysilko, 1993). After investigating Franklin's complaint, the OCR concluded that the teacher and school district had indeed violated Title IX. Two lower courts dismissed Franklin's suit, holding that individuals are not entitled to monetary damages under Title IX. The Supreme Court held unanimously that public school students could obtain damages in an action brought to enforce Title IX. The student sexual harassment target, Christine Franklin, alleged that she had been denied educational opportunity due to the sexual advances of this male high school teacher (Long, 1997; Vanderlinden, 1993). The court's ruling in *Franklin* opened the door to monetary liability for the sexual harassment claims of both students and employees. The

controversial issue, as shown in future rulings, is the level of knowledge a district must have to establish its legal responsibility for alleged harassment.

With the *Franklin* ruling, in addition to holding that damages must be made available to a Title IX plaintiff, the U. S. Supreme Court also demanded that educational institutions take appropriate actions in response to complaints. Schools must set up preventive measures to stop sexual harassment, implement policies which prohibit sexual harassment, establish grievance procedures which encourage the reporting of incidents and train staff members in sexual harassment prevention.

Doe v. Petaluma City School District

No court had addressed the specific issue of district liability for creating a hostile environment based on student-to-student sexual harassment prior to Doe v. Petaluma. In Doe v. Petaluma City School District (1993), a student claimed that while she was a student at Kenilworth Junior High School, the Petaluma City School District failed to put a stop to the sexually harassing acts of her peers. She complained that boys in the school "mooed" and made comments about her breasts. The student alleged that she was repeatedly subjected to this sexual harassment by other students throughout seventh and eighth grade, that she informed school officials of the harassment, and that they did not respond to the harassment adequately. This was one of the first cases to look at the broad issue of student-to-student harassment.

Ultimately, the court found that hostile environment sexual harassment claims may be brought under Title IX, but to obtain damages the Plaintiff must prove intentional discrimination on the basis of sex on the part of an employee of the educational institution, and not just that an employee of the institution knew or should have known of the hostile environment and failed to take appropriate action to end it (Long, 1997; Vanderlinden, 1993). After the *Doe* case, educators could no longer take student complaints regarding sexual harassment as some adolescent rite-of-passage that the student must endure. These complaints must be monitored for pervasiveness or severity to ascertain if they rise to the level of peer sexual harassment on the basis of race, national origin, religion or any other protected category. When harassing conduct is found, administrators must take appropriate steps to end the harassment.

Bruneau v. South Kortright Central School District

One important 1996 case provided some protection to school districts in holding that to establish a Title IX claim for a hostile environment created by student-to-student sexual harassment, the Plaintiff must show that the school and/or school board received "actual" notice of the sexually harassing conduct and failed to take action to remedy the problem. In Bruneau v. South Kortright Central School District, (1996), a sixth grade student claimed that she and other girls in her class were subjected to verbal and physical harassment, which created a hostile learning

environment (Long, 1997). Eve Bruneau alleged that she and the other girls in the class were often referred to as "lesbian," "prostitute," "retard," "bitch," "whore," and "ugly dog faced bitch," by the boys in the class. Alleged behaviors also included snapping the girls' bras, stuffing paper down the girls' blouses, cutting the girls' hair, grabbing the girls' breasts, spitting, shoving, hitting and kicking. Ms. Bruneau asserted that the teacher and the assistant superintendent were advised of the situation on several occasions. The defendants asserted that, except for one name-calling incident, they were not informed of the sexual harassment in the classroom. They claimed that no formal, written charge of sexual harassment was ever filed. The judge felt it was beyond the court's role to make determinations with regard to the case.

In providing information to school districts, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has identified this responsibly in the following manner: A school will be in violation of Title IX for peer sexual harassment if the school "has notice" of a sexually hostile environment and fails to take immediate and appropriate corrective action. According to an OCR letter of 1996, a school will have notice when it actually "knew, or in the exercise of reasonable care, should have known" about the harassment.

Rowinsky v. Bryan Independent School District

While the majority of courts considering the issue of sexually hostile environments caused by peers have indicated that schools may be liable under Title IX

for their knowing failure to take appropriate actions to remedy the hostile environment, Rowinsky v. Bryan Independent School District (1996) held to the contrary (Gluckman, 1996). Two eighth grade sisters experienced several instances of sexually harassing behaviors on the school bus. The girls were grabbed in the breasts, slapped on the buttocks, and subjected to sexually explicit comments. On one occasion the parents called and complained to the assistant principal. One boy was suspended from the bus for a period of time. The parents filed charges against the school claiming that the girls were not provided protection and safety. In this case the court rejected the authority of other Federal courts and OCR's longstanding construction of Title IX and held that a school district is not liable under Title IX for peer harassment unless the school district directly discriminated based on sex. In other words, the school would only be held liable if the school responded differently to sexual harassment or similar claims of girls versus boys.

Rosa H. v. San Elizario Independent School District

In Rosa H. v. San Elizario Independent School District (1997), the court determined that in order to hold a school district liable under Title IX for teacher-student sexual harassment based on a hostile educational environment, a plaintiff must show that an employee who has been vested by the school board with supervisory

power over the offending employee actually knew of the abuse, had the power to end the abuse and failed to do so.

Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District

Continuing with this same interpretation, in Gebser v. Lago Vista Independent School District (1998), the U.S. Supreme Court concluded that it would frustrate the purposes of Title IX to permit a damages recovery against a school district for a teacher's sexual harassment of a student without actual notice to a school district official. At a minimum, an official of the school with authority to take corrective action to end the discrimination must be notified. The court states that they will not hold a school district liable in damages under title IX for a teacher's sexual harassment of a student absent actual notice and deliberate indifference.

Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education

The courts were sending mixed messages according to the level of the court and the location in the country. Action was again needed by the Supreme Court. The emerging landmark case regarding student-to-student sexual harassment was presented in Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education (1996). In *Davis*, a parent brought action on behalf of a fifth grade student against the school board, superintendent and

elementary principal alleging sexual harassment of her child by a fellow classmate. The United States District Court for the Middle District of Georgia dismissed the parent's lawsuit finding that "student-on-student" or peer harassment provides no basis for a Title IX private cause of action for damages. Thereafter, the case was appealed to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals.

After reviewing the case on August 21, 1997, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting en banc, agreed with the lower court that although the girl suffered harm, her complaint of peer sexual harassment was not proper under Title IX (Taylor, 1997). This Court of Appeals decision might have, if allowed to stand, upset the majority of existing student-to-student sexual harassment rulings (Michaelis, 1998). The standard chosen by the 11th Circuit was not the standard the majority of lower courts had applied. The court concluded that school boards did not have notice of this potential liability when they accepted federal financial assistance under the statute.

The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to review the case in order to resolve conflicting Circuit decisions. Oral arguments were presented in January of 1999 and on May 24, 1999, the Court reversed the 11th Circuit's judgment in a narrow 5-4 decision. The Court concluded that schools accepting federal money can be held liable for damages to victims of sexual harassment under Title IX. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the majority, said that liability can exist only when school officials know about and are deliberately indifferent to sexual harassment "so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it can be said to deprive the victims of access to

the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school." The Court recognized that students often engage in insults, banter, teasing, shoving, pushing and gender-specific conduct that is upsetting to the student subjected to it. The majority opinion emphasized that damages are not available for simple acts of teasing and name-calling among school children even where these comments target differences in gender.

With the *Davis* decision, the Supreme Court adopted the OCR's strict liability standard for sexual harassment rather than the alternative positions outlined in several earlier Circuit Court decisions. Its vicarious liability standard assured that a child has a remedy if he or she is molested by either a school employee or peer. This decision should encourage schools to be more vigilant in protecting students from abusive employees or from their peers.

On the other hand, one thing seems certain: to impose a strict liability standard against school districts every time a school employee sexually abuses a child would be financially disastrous to school systems absent some firm limits on the amount of money awards (Fossey, DeMitchell, & Roberts, 1997). The dissenting opinion in the Davis decision identifies many questions and important issues which remain unresolved regarding peer sexual harassment under Title IX. In the context of teacher harassment, the *Gebser* notice standard imposes some limit on school liability. Where peer harassment is the discrimination, however, it imposes no limitation at all. In most cases of student misbehavior, it is the teacher who has the authority, at least in the first instance, to punish the student and take other measures to remedy the harassment. The

anomalous result would be that while a school district cannot be held liable for a teacher's sexual harassment of a student without notice to the school board (or at least to the principal), the district can be held liable for a teacher's failure to remedy peer harassment. The threshold for school liability appears to be lower when the harasser is a student than when the harasser is a teacher who is an agent of the school.

The minority opinion in *Davis* stressed that a private cause of action would justify a corps of federal administrators in writing regulations on student harassment. It would embroil schools and courts in endless litigation over what qualifies as peer sexual harassment and what constitutes a reasonable response. Defining the appropriate role of schools in teaching and supervising children who are beginning to explore their own sexuality and learning how to express it to others is one of the most complex and sensitive issues our schools face. Such decisions, according to the dissenting Justices, are best made by parents and by the teachers and school administrators who can counsel with them.

Several important issues remain to be resolved regarding sexual harassment in the school setting. Sexual harassment, with its emerging parameters within the court system, is definitely an issue that impacts every student, teacher, administrator and school board member of our nation's schools.

Surveys on Sexual Harassment

Massachusetts

One of the first student surveys on sexual harassment was by the Massachusetts Department of Education in 1980-81. A questionnaire was given to approximately 200 male and female high school students, and additional in-depth interviews were conducted with 60 girls enrolled in courses considered nontraditional for females (shop, auto body, auto mechanics, plant maintenance, plumbing, air conditioning, etc.) The study revealed that 50% of the girls had been sexually harassed at school. Only one male student acknowledged being a victim of sexual harassment (Bogart & Stein, 1987). The majority of the harassment incidents included leers, remarks, name calling and gestures.

Minnesota

In 1992 the Minnesota Sexual Harassment/Sexual Violence Survey was sent to all of the state's junior and senior high schools to determine the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual violence (Murdock & Kysilko, 1993). Minnesota administrators were also questioned about how their schools were responding to the problem, which

programs are most effective and which areas need more work. About 70% of the schools responded.

Minnesota secondary school administrators reported 1,110 incidents of sexual harassment and 95 incidents of sexual violence during the 1991-92 school years. Only 38% of the administrators reported that their policies were well understood, 44% required students to attend sexual harassment training, and only 28% provided training for the administrators or staff. They reported that sexual harassment was a significant problem in their schools and their knowledge base was extremely lacking. Much more needed to be done to prevent sexual harassment in their schools (Murdock & Kysilko, 1993).

American Association of University Women

In 1993, the American Association of University Women (AAUW) Educational Foundation commissioned Louis Harris and Associates to conduct a national survey of middle and high school students (AAUW, 1993). The purposes of the study were to measure the extent of sexual harassment and to assess its impact on students. The sample consisted of 1632 female and male students in 79 public schools across the United States and contained representative numbers of Hispanic, Euro-Americans and African-American students from grades eight through eleven. The methodology of the study included approaching randomly selected schools and then going into randomly

selected classrooms in those schools. Almost 100% participation within the classroom was achieved. The survey instrument consisted of 14 types of sexual harassment, half verbal and half physical.

The results of this AAUW study have documented the scope of the problem. Eighty-five percent of the girls and 76% of the boys said they had experienced at least one type of sexual harassment. The racial breakdown for female victims consisted of whites (87%), African-Americans (84%), and Hispanic (82%). The most frequently experienced types of harassment were "sexual comments, jokes, gestures, or looks" (76% of the girls), followed by "touching, grabbing and/or pinching in a sexual way" (65% of the girls). The least frequently noted experience was 'forced to do something other than kissing' (13% of the girls) (AAUW, 1993). This study showed that there is a wide spread problem among our secondary school students. And surprisingly, even though boys were not targets as frequently or as repeatedly as girls, three out of four of them had experienced peer sexual harassment.

The 1993 AAUW survey revealed the national impact of peer sexual harassment on educational environments. Nearly one in four students said that peer sexual harassment resulted in their not wanting to attend school. Nearly one in four girls said that harassment caused them to stay home from school or cut a class (Sandler, 1994). In addition, 32 percent of girls and 13 percent of boys reported not wanting to talk as much in class after experiencing harassment. These students also reported that sexual harassment made it harder to pay attention in school, caused them

to do poorly on a test or assignment and made it harder for them to study (Sandler, 1994).

North Dakota

Prior to 1994, no study had been conducted on the extent of sexual harassment in the public schools of North Dakota. For school administrators and educational policy makers to respond properly to the issue of sexual harassment, there was a need to establish data on its extent in North Dakota public schools (Stratton & Backes, 1997). The researchers obtained a copy of the 1993 original 19-page AAUW survey. Items not germane to this study were eliminated. The survey was administered to 178 scientifically selected seniors from eight high schools.

Of the 176 respondents (two were returned blank), 155 (88%) of the students answered often, occasionally or rarely to having experienced one or more sexual harassment behaviors during their school life. Of the male student respondents, 72 (82%) indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment; and of the 89 female student respondents, 83 (93%) indicated that they had experienced sexual harassment (Stratton & Backes, 1997). The most frequent type of harassment reported was student-to-student harassment for both the males and the females. The hallway and classroom were most frequently cited by males and females as the location of occurrences of sexual harassment. The findings of the North Dakota survey are

slightly higher than those found on the national average in the study done by the American Association of University Women in 1993.

Connecticut

In January of 1995, a statewide survey was conducted in Connecticut. "In Our Own Backyard: Sexual Harassment in Connecticut's Public High Schools," a study of sexual harassment in the Connecticut public schools during the 1993-1994 school year, was released (Permanent Commission, 1995). Seventy-eight percent of a random sample of high school students (308 girls and 235 boys) in grades 10 through 12 reported experiencing at least one incident of sexual harassment in high school. Girls were nearly twice as likely to report experiencing the problem as boys. Ninety-two percent of the female students and 57 % of the male students reported that they had been the targets of unwelcome sexual conduct since they started high school. Although the percentages in the national survey and this state survey vary somewhat, both firmly establish that the majority of our young people have been the target of sexual harassment of one form or another.

These statistics, combined with recent increased public awareness of sexual harassment, underscore the importance of school district responsibilities pertaining to sexual harassment in schools, on school grounds, or at school-related activities (Stratton & Backes, 1997). Prior to the pilot study of Oklahoma superintendents

(Dzialo, 1998a, 1998b), little was known about the procedures that Oklahoma public schools were taking to protect the students from sexual harassment.

1998 Pilot Study- Survey of Oklahoma Public School Superintendents

In the spring of 1998, a study was conducted to obtain information regarding the existence of sexual harassment policies, training and the perception of the problem by the public school superintendents of Oklahoma (Dzialo, 1998a, 1998b). The study utilized a written survey instrument to obtain information from the superintendents of Oklahoma's 547 school districts. The researcher wanted to ascertain from the superintendents the existence of a sexual harassment policy in their district, to whom that policy is provided, whether their district provides any sexual harassment awareness and prevention training, to whom the training is provided, and the superintendents' description of that training.

In addition, the survey sought the superintendents' perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in his or her district on a Likert scale of 1 (little problem) to 9 (large problem). The survey identified the school district as either dependent or independent. The size of the school district, grouped in one of three categories used by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, (less than 500, between 500 and 10,000, and more than 10,000 students) was also identified.

A survey was mailed to the superintendent of each of Oklahoma's 547 school districts. A letter accompanied the survey describing the study, methods, participation, benefits/risks and confidentiality. Each survey was numbered so the researcher would have a record of which districts responded.

Responses to the narrative question regarding the sexual harassment training were coded, grouped and categorized. A chart was constructed indicating the providers of training and the sources of training materials. Frequencies were noted regarding the kind and size of districts responding. In addition, frequencies of districts with a sexual harassment policy and to whom those policies are dispersed, frequencies of districts providing sexual harassment prevention training and to whom the training is provided and mean scores of the superintendents' perception of the problem, according to size of district, were reported. The researcher examined the relationship between the size of the district with the superintendent's perception of the sexual harassment problem. The researcher also investigated the relationship between the size of the district and the existence of a policy and sexual harassment awareness and prevention training.

School district size in the state of Oklahoma varies tremendously. The smallest district responding was a dependent school district with 17 students and the largest respondent district had over 40,000 students. The seven largest responding school districts each had more than 10,000 students. As shown in Table 1, of Oklahoma's 547 school districts, 317 districts have under 500 students, 220 districts have 500-10,000 students, and 10 school districts have more than 10,000 students. The returned

surveys reflected the lowest response rate from the category of small district superintendents (41%). Half (50%) of the medium size district superintendents responded to the survey. While the large district superintendent group had the fewest members, it presented the highest percent of responses (70%). Total response rate was 46%.

Table 1
Response Rate of Oklahoma School Superintendents

District Size	Oklahoma	Respondents	Percent
< 500	317	131	41%
500- 10,000	220	111	50%
> 10, 000	10	7	70%
Total	547	249	46%

A lower percent of small districts currently have a sexual harassment policy in place and/or provide sexual harassment training. One might speculate, therefore, that a disproportionate amount of the districts not yet addressing the issue of sexual harassment chose not to return the survey.

For statistical analysis, the medium size districts and large districts were aggregated into one group. The superintendents rated the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem on a scale of 1 - 9, one signifying little problem and a score of 9

indicating a large problem. A one way ANOVA cited significant differences between district means of the superintendents' perception of the sexual harassment problem. $F(1,247) = 22.3$, $p = .00$ The superintendents of the larger districts rated the problem higher than the small district superintendents. In other words, the smaller school district respondent superintendents rated the magnitude of the problem lower. The kind of school district (dependent or independent) did not reveal significant differences between district means on the perception of the problem.

The relationship between district size and the existence of a policy and sexual harassment training was then studied. A chi-square analysis reported significant pair-wise differences according to district size and existence of a policy. $\bar{x}$ $(1, N= 249) = 4.883$, $p < .05$ A chi-square analysis also demonstrated that the larger districts, serving over 500 students, were more likely than expected to provide training on sexual harassment prevention. There were pair-wise significant differences in the means. The small school districts, serving less than 500 students, were less likely than expected to provide training. $\bar{x}$ $(1, N=249) = 17.222$, $p < .05$

The first major finding of this study was that 86% of the 249 superintendents reported having a district sexual harassment policy. While that policy could range from one sentence in a policy book all the way to a detailed policy for both employee and student-to-student sexual harassment, at least the issue was being addressed in some fashion. Furthermore, the policy was provided in writing to the students (60%), faculty (66%), and parents (31%) of the time.

The second major finding related to sexual harassment training. Only 41% of the 249 responding districts provided any form of training. Training is given to these school groups at the following rates- administrators (39%), teachers (38%), staff (32%), students (23%), and parents (4%). Training is a critical component of a sexual harassment prevention program.

While 102 respondents reported providing sexual harassment training in their district, exactly 100 superintendents answered the narrative question seeking a description of those sessions. Responses were coded in two categories, the people providing the training and the sources of materials. Below are the number of times that these categories are mentioned by the responding superintendents.

Table 2
Providers of Sexual Harassment Training

Providers		Source of Materials	
Principal	37	Video	12
Attorney	18	School Board	5
Superintendent	16	PDC	3
Out of District Personnel	16	Others	
Central Office Personnel	8	(VoTech, Health Dept.)	2

The last major finding is that the superintendents of the larger districts (over 500 students), had a significantly higher mean score on their perception of the sexual harassment problem. The lowest mean score for perception of the problem was by the superintendents of the smallest districts, (under 500 students).

This pilot study was based on a survey instrument mailed to each of the 547 school district superintendents in the state of Oklahoma. The survey contained little opportunity to obtain any in-depth information about the status of sexual harassment prevention activities in each of these districts. The researcher had several recommendations for further research in this area.

1. This survey information could be followed up with a qualitative component. A representative proportion of school districts in each of the three size categories could be locations for potential interviews with the superintendents, as well as students, teachers, and site administrators. This would provide a richness of information not available in a survey.
2. A survey could be administered to a randomly selected group of students across the state of Oklahoma. This survey would serve to measure Oklahoma students' experiences with peer sexual harassment, as compared to other state and national surveys.
3. This study could be replicated with a more in-depth survey.
4. A survey could be administered to a representative population of school principals, counselors and teachers across the state. This survey could focus on a particular level, such as high school students, middle school students or elementary age students. A comparative study between the results of this study and the study of the superintendents would allow an

analysis of the varying perspectives of superintendents, principals, counselors and teachers.

5. A study focusing on effective sexual harassment prevention strategies could be conducted.

6. A study focusing on the variety, quality, and comprehensiveness of sexual harassment policies utilized by Oklahoma's public schools would be informative and beneficial.

7. A qualitative perspective-seeking study focusing on the consequences of student-to-student sexual harassment would provide vital information for school administrators, teachers, and parents, as they attempt to prevent this harassment.

This current study was a result of the fourth recommendation for further studies. The area of focus was principals, counselors and teachers at the middle school level. I selected middle schools as the focus of research for two reasons. The largest percentage of students surveyed nationally cited the seventh grade as the point at which they first experienced sexual harassment (AAUW, 1993). Middle school represents the grades in which the highest level of harassment occurs (Stein, 1993). The need to conform to group standards can result in name-calling, rumor spreading, and sexual harassment incidents. On the other hand, young adolescents are still open to discussion about ethical and moral issues. They have a large capacity for commitment and empathy for others.

Secondly, research reveals that female adolescents, the most frequent target of sexual harassment, face a myriad of problems at this developmental age. Among these difficulties are a drop in self-esteem, a loss of academic achievement and personal direction, and such problems as eating disorders and depression (AAUW, 1993; Gillian, 1990; Stein, 1994). These same behaviors can be responses to the pervasive sexual harassment they experience, especially in at the middle school level (Stein, 1994; Strauss, 1992).

Results of the present study examined the sexual harassment policy and training issues as well as the perception of the problem of sexual harassment from three different perspectives; the middle school principal, counselor and teacher. It also examined school size as well as district size and their relationship to these issues. The relationships between this data and the results of the pilot study of superintendents were then examined.

Prevention Strategies

Schools face the legal ramifications of inadequate sexual harassment policies and implementation of such policies. However, the more important reason for providing an environment free from such harassment activities is the nurturing of the student in the educational setting (Roscoe, et al, 1994). Victims of sexual harassment often experience depression, a drop in academic performance, lack of desire to attend

school, change in dress and appearance as well as many other behaviors (Landau, 1993). It is an important mission of school personnel to provide an environment free from such harassment for each student.

School districts and school officials must also protect themselves from liability (Underwood, 1987). They must find the best way to establish a safe environment in which students can learn (Mentell, 1993). Prior to or concurrent with the development of a student sexual harassment policy, the district should conduct a survey to determine the extent of the problem of student-to-student sexual harassment. The results of this survey can help ensure the policy and any subsequent procedures or regulations meet the needs of the district. The survey can also provide information useful in developing a curriculum to educate students and staff about peer sexual harassment (Webb et al, 1997).

Minimizing the risks of sexual harassment in the school or work environment comes from having a clear, written policy against sexual harassment, following the policy, providing regular training and education to all supervisory and non-supervisory employees and students regarding the policy, expressing disapproval of sexual harassment and stating the consequences, maintaining a procedure for sexual harassment complaints that does not require that they complain to an offending supervisor or adult, ensuring privacy and protecting witnesses and victims against retaliation, prompt and thorough investigation of all reports and complaints, immediate corrective action when needed, appropriate consequences if allegations are

substantiated and prompt reporting of suspected child abuse (Flynn, 1997; Johnson & Lennon,1997; Nobile, 1993; Riger, 1991).

Simply having a "boilerplate" policy adopted and imbedded in the policy manual will do little to make the case that a school district takes sexual harassment seriously (Shoop, 1995). The Office for Civil Rights will look to determine if the school district's grievance procedures include adequate notice to students and parents, application of the procedure to complaints alleging harassment, investigation of the complaints by an impartial investigator including opportunity to present witnesses and other evidence, designated time frames for the stages of the complaint process, notice to the parties of the disposition of the complaint and steps the district has taken to prevent recurrence of any harassment. A student should never be told to work out the problem directly with the alleged harasser (Walta, 1997). Upon receipt of a sexual harassment complaint, schools should take timely and effective steps tailored to the specific situation (Penfield, 1993). Action should be taken to stop the harassment and address the effects on those who have been victimized. Steps should be taken to prevent any further harassment. According to the Office for Civil Rights this means that the harassed student and the parents must know how to report any future incidents of harassment. Every school should have a policy in accordance with the OCR guidelines to limit their district's exposure and to help protect students from such harassment.

The ramifications of the previously mentioned steps to the educational setting

are well documented. By clearly presenting this information to the students, providing ways to report such offenses, investigating complaints thoroughly, and taking appropriate action to prevent such behaviors in the future, school officials will help ensure a quality learning environment for all young people (Sorenson, 1994; Wetherfield, 1990). Schools must equip staff and students to address the concerns of sexual harassment (Marczley, 1993). It is the responsibility of every educator to go beyond compliance of a sexual harassment policy and create an accepted standard of respectful behavior among teachers, students and employers (Daniels, 1995).

Developing and sustaining a comprehensive sexual harassment prevention program is not an easy task. The people selected to manage such activities have a tremendous responsibility. A program of sexual harassment prevention should address: authority, accountability, responsibility and training (Dunklee & Shoop, 1993). Research will help educators determine the most effective policies, procedures, strategies, materials and methods to positively affect the climate of a school. The present study will provide information regarding whether the middle level schools of Oklahoma have, in fact, established a sexual harassment policy and training procedure to help ensure such a quality learning environment for our students.

Chapter Summary

Sexual harassment in the school setting takes a heavy toll on the young people

of our country (Bogart & Stein, 1987). We know that it occurs in virtually every school (Coolidge,1994). Over three out of four of our young students are affected academically, emotionally, socially and behaviorally by this harassment at the hands of their peers (AAUW, 1993). In addition to the devastating impact on the targets of this sexual harassment, school districts also have potential liability if they show deliberate indifference or do not deal aggressively with the problem (Higginson, 1993).

One of the steps that each district should take is to develop a comprehensive sexual harassment policy (EEOC, 1980; Furst, 1995; Gluckman, 1996; Kraus, 1996; Nobile, 1994). A separate student sexual harassment policy will more effectively deal with this pervasive problem (Sandler, 1994). The policy should be specific in nature and include a grievance procedure for handling complaints. This policy should be distributed to all students, school personnel, as well as to parents and other district patrons (Webb et al, 1997).

Training for all students, staff, faculty, administrators and parents is necessary. Numerous curriculum programs are available for school districts to utilize (Klein et al. 1986; Roscoe et al, 1994; Stein et al, 1994). It is the moral obligation and legal responsibility for school leaders to take the necessary steps to provide a safe and positive climate for our school children.

Doty and Strauss (1996) provide a clear and concise list of recommendations that could prove beneficial for school districts. The first list consists of recommendations for sexual harassment policies addressing student-to-student

complaints.

1. Establish a separate policy.
2. Open with a strong philosophy statement.
3. Include a legal definition of sexual harassment.
4. Describe who is covered by the policy.
5. State clearly that the policy prohibits sexual harassment both on and off school grounds.
6. Provide a list of specific behaviors that may constitute sexual harassment.
7. Provide guidelines to assist staff in determining whether the misconduct is sexual harassment.
8. Provide a list of general sanctions and penalties for the harasser and state that the sanctions apply to all students, even those with disabilities.
9. State the potential consequences for school administrators and staff who receive complaints of sexual harassment and fail to act promptly and appropriately.
10. Provide a statement about confidentiality.
11. Indicate the support services available to student victims of sexual harassment.
12. Provide a statement prohibiting retaliation.
13. Identify how employees, students, parents, if appropriate, and community members will be notified about the policy.
14. Provide a statement regarding the training of school staff.
15. Provide a statement regarding the training of students and parents.
16. Identify a plan of policy review, evaluation, and improvement. (Doty & Strauss, 1996, 7-12)

In addition, Doty and Strauss (1996) include a list of procedural components of an effective sexual harassment policy.

1. Provide a philosophy statement concerning the district's commitment to prompt and equitable resolution and the rights and responsibilities of the parties to a complaint.
2. Outline a clear and simple grievance procedure.
3. Encourage victims to put their complaints in writing.
4. Place time lines on the filing of complaints.
5. Identify the district's obligation to report criminal activity and child abuse, if appropriate, to law enforcement authorities.
6. Distinguish between informal and formal complaint procedures.
7. Provide specific time frames in which school personnel are required to commence and complete investigations.

8. Identify the names and titles of school officials responsible for conducting investigations, and inform victims of their right to have either a female or male investigator.
9. Require administrators to provide a written report of investigation findings and action taken to resolve the complaint.
10. Insist that parents of both student victims and harassers be notified when allegations are serious or if misconduct is repeated.
11. Provide information about where and how long records should be kept.
12. Describe appeal procedures and provide information about alternative complaint options with other agencies.
13. Indicate that the grievance procedure does not supersede other grievance procedures contained in district policy or collective bargaining agreements.
14. Encourage informal processes, specifically mediation, at each stage of the grievance procedure. (Doty & Strauss, 1996, p.12-17)

Little is known about the existence of sexual harassment policies, training or prevention strategies in Oklahoma's schools. Based upon the results of one pilot study, the school superintendents reported that 86% of Oklahoma's school districts currently have a sexual harassment policy (Dzialo,1998a, 1998b). We do not know how the policy was developed, nor do we know if it consists of little more than a single line in a school board policy book. We know that the written copies of that policy, as reported by the superintendents, range from 66% appearing in the faculty handbook to only 31% of the parents receiving a copy of the policy. While 41% of the responding district superintendents report some form of sexual harassment training, within that group the recipients of the training vary greatly. Only 23% of the students receive training, while a mere 4% of the parents are involved (Dzialo,1998a, 1998b).

While regional, state and national surveys show the pervasiveness of the peer sexual harassment problem, it appears that the perceptions of the Oklahoma school district superintendents do not validate those numbers. Furthermore, the smaller the

school district, the smaller the rating of the problem by the superintendents. Further research into the implementation of sexual harassment prevention strategies in Oklahoma's schools is needed.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Methodology

The design of this study utilized a written survey instrument to obtain information from middle level educators of Oklahoma's schools. The researcher sought insight from principals, counselors and teachers regarding the existence of a sexual harassment policy at their middle school, to whom that policy was provided, whether their school provided any sexual harassment awareness and prevention training, to whom the training was provided and who provided it. In addition, the survey sought the educators' perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in the middle school and the educator's perception of the effectiveness of the school's sexual harassment policy.

Population Sample

The sample population for this study, 155 middle level principals, was drawn from a complete mailing list obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Education of the 311 middle level principals in the state of Oklahoma. The mailing labels were organized from the smallest zip code to the largest zip code. Every other

name on the mailing list received a copy of the survey in the mail, along with a letter of explanation and a postage-paid return envelope. After a two-week waiting period a second request packet was mailed to each of the middle level principals who had not yet responded.

The sample population for this study, 188 middle level counselors, was drawn from a complete mailing list obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Education of the 376 middle level counselors in the state. Again, the mailing labels were organized from the smallest zip code to the largest zip code. As with the middle level principals, every other counselor on the mailing list received a copy of the survey, letter of explanation and a postage-paid return envelope. After a two-week waiting period a second request packet was mailed to each of the middle level counselors who had not yet responded.

The sample population for this study, 160 middle level teachers, was drawn from mailing labels of the 10,770 Oklahoma public school middle school teachers. Again arranged in order of the smallest zip code to the largest zip code, every 67th teacher on the list received a survey, letter of explanation and a postage-paid return envelope. After a two-week waiting period a second request packet was mailed to each of the middle level teachers who had not yet responded.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument used in this study was based on a survey used in the pilot study of all of Oklahoma's 547 school district superintendents (Dzialo, 1998a, 1998b). To improve the survey's ability to gather descriptive data, several items were changed. Rather than identifying the school size by previously organized categories set up by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, as in the superintendent's survey, educators were asked to give the actual student population of their school and the actual population of their school district. This allowed the researcher to set up appropriate categories during the data analysis phase of the study. In addition, respondents indicated the grades served in their school.

The yes/no questions regarding the existence of a policy and training now included a "don't know" category, as there was an increased likelihood that some of these educators may not be aware of the existence of a sexual harassment policy or training. A list of sexual harassment training recipients and providers, gleaned from the pilot study survey instrument, was printed for the respondents to circle. The respondent may also include other recipients and providers not listed. The survey included two questions based on a likert scale of 1 to 9. The first question asks, "Based upon your knowledge, to what degree is sexual harassment a problem in your school?" The second question, added to the present study since the pilot study, seeks the respondent's perception of the effectiveness of the school's sexual harassment policy.

It asks the educator, "How would you rate the effectiveness of your school's sexual harassment policy?" Other changes included a more thorough definition of sexual harassment provided at the bottom of the survey and a narrative question which allowed the respondent to provide additional comments on the topic of sexual harassment. Appendix D includes the survey instrument.

Descriptive data included demographic information obtained from the subjects about school population, grades served in their middle level school and the school district population. The researcher tallied the number of middle level principals, counselors and teachers reporting their school having a sexual harassment policy, to whom the policy was given, the provision of sexual harassment training, who provided the training, and to whom that training was given. In addition, the information requested about the educator's perception of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment and the educator's perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy in his or her school was entered for analysis.

For the one way analysis of variance, the independent variables for this study included the size of the student population at the middle school, size of the student population of the school district, and the category of the educator (principal, counselor or teacher). Dependent measures for the ANOVA in this study are the educator's perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in his or her school and the educator's perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy at the school, if one exists. Chi-square analysis utilized the factors of district size and school

size with the existence of a sexual harassment policy. Also examined with the Chi-square analysis was the relationship between the district size and school size with the existence of sexual harassment training.

Procedures

The instrumentation of this study (Appendix D) consisted of a written survey mailed to middle school educators. This survey was mailed to a random sampling of Oklahoma's middle level principals, counselors and teachers. A letter accompanied the survey describing the study, methods, voluntary participation, benefits/risks and confidentiality. The return rate from each of the three groups of educators was recorded. Responses were tallied according to respondent category of middle level principal, counselor or teacher. Responses were then further recorded according to the size of the school and size of the school district.

Each of the 155 middle level principals, 188 middle level counselors and 160 middle level teachers was recorded in a chart. Columns next to the names recorded the receipt of the survey and informed consent form as they arrived. A number was assigned to each participant receiving a survey and this number was recorded on the survey instrument prior to its mailing. Second requests were sent to those not responding at the end of two weeks. All information from this project will be kept confidential within limits of the law. An assigned number was given to school

personnel quoted in this study. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet. All identifiable data will be destroyed when no longer needed, and project publications will not allow identification of individual subjects or schools. Since the identity of the participating individuals and schools will be protected, there appear to be no risks to the school personnel involved in the project.

Data Analysis

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to determine the relationship between the variables of district size, school size and kind of educator on the educators' perception of the sexual harassment problem. In addition, a one way analysis of variance was conducted to determine the relationship between the independent variables of district size, school size and kind of educator on the educator's perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy, if one existed. A chi-square analysis examined the relationship between the district and school size to the existence of a sexual harassment policy and the district and school size to the existence of sexual harassment training. Responses to the narrative questions were coded, grouped and categorized. A chart was constructed indicating the providers of training and the sources of training materials. Frequencies were gathered on respondents in the three major categories of middle level principals,

counselors and teachers. Within those three groups data was recorded regarding the student population of the school, the grades served in the school and the student population of the school and district. Within those subgroups, the researcher noted frequencies of the existence of a sexual harassment policy and to whom it was dispersed. The researcher noted frequencies of sexual harassment training, who received the training, and who provided the training. Additional comments about the training were listed, coded, and categorized.

Chapter Summary

A written survey was sent to 155 Oklahoma middle level principals, 188 middle school counselors and 160 middle level school teachers, a random sampling of Oklahoma middle school educators. The survey gathered descriptive data regarding the size of the reporting school district and the school itself. It revealed whether the middle school had a sexual harassment policy and where the policy was printed, from the selections of student handbook, parent handbook, faculty handbook and the district policy book. The respondent indicated whether the school provided sexual harassment awareness and prevention training, to whom the training was given and who provided the training. The survey included a likert scale (1 - 9) of the respondent's perception of the sexual harassment problem and the level of effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy. In addition, respondents were allowed to make any additional comments.

A one way analysis of variance was conducted to examine the relationship between the kind of educator (principal, counselor or teacher) and the perception of the sexual harassment problem, the relationship between the size of the school district and the perception of the sexual harassment problem and the size of the middle school and the perception of the problem. In addition, a one way analysis of variance was conducted to examine the relationship between the kind of educator and the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy, the relationship between the size of the school district and the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy, and the relationship between the size of the middle school and the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy.

A chi-square analysis was conducted to examine relationships between the size of the school district and the existence of a sexual harassment policy and the size of the reporting school and the existence of a sexual harassment policy. In addition, a chi-square analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the size of the school district and the existence of sexual harassment awareness and prevention training and the relationship between the size of the reporting school and the existence of sexual harassment training.

Finally, narrative information from the responding middle school principals, counselors and teachers was reported. Five major themes emerged from the respondents' comments. Each comment was then rated a *one*, *two* or *three*. *One* indicated a response that sexual harassment was a minimal problem, *two* indicated a

neutral response and a *three* reported that the educator expressed a real concern or need for improvement in this area. These comments provided additional insight into the status of sexual harassment prevention in Oklahoma's middle level schools.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in this study. The main purpose of the study was twofold: (1) To determine if Oklahoma's middle schools have established a school policy to address sexual harassment issues; and, (2) To determine if Oklahoma's middle schools are providing sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. A summary of the procedures used to collect data are presented. Finally, the data are presented that address each of the five research questions that guided this study.

The sample population for this study was comprised of 155 Oklahoma middle school principals, 188 Oklahoma middle school counselors and 160 Oklahoma middle school teachers. These educators were selected randomly from a mailing list of all of Oklahoma's 311 middle school principals, 376 middle school counselors and 10,770 middle school teachers. The mailing labels for each of these three groups of educators were organized according to zip codes, smallest to the largest. In March of 1999, every other middle school principal and every other middle school counselor from the previously organized mailing lists received a survey in the mail. Along with the survey they received a letter of explanation and a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The 10,770 Oklahoma middle school teacher labels were also organized according to zip

codes. Every 67th teacher on the list received a survey accompanied by a letter of explanation and stamped, self-addressed envelope during the same time frame. Two weeks later, a second request was sent to each principal, counselor and teacher who had not yet responded.

Response Rate of Middle School Educators Surveyed

As reported by the Oklahoma State Department of Education, in March of 1999 there were 311 middle school principals, 376 middle school counselors and 10,770 middle school teachers in the state of Oklahoma. The survey instrument was mailed to 155 principals, 188 counselors and 160 teachers. After second requests, 93 of the principals (60%), 118 of the counselors (63%) and 91 of the teachers (57%) responded. Total percentage response rate was (60%). As shown in Table 3, a total of 302 responses were received from the 503 surveys mailed.

Table 3
Response Rate of Middle School Educators Surveyed

Educator	In Oklahoma	Surveyed	Responded	Percent
Principal	311	155	93	60%
Counselor	376	188	118	63%
Teacher	10,770	160	91	57%

Note: Number Surveyed: 503
Note: Number Responded: 302
Note: Total Response Rate: 60%

All data were recorded and analyzed. Descriptive information such as the category of educator, population of the school district, population of the school and grades served in that school were entered. Respondents provided information on the existence of a sexual harassment policy, where it was printed and to whom it was given. If sexual harassment prevention and awareness training was provided, the respondent indicated who provided the training and who received the training. In addition, the respondent's perception of the problem of sexual harassment and the perception of the effectiveness of the policy on a Likert scale of 1 - 9 were recorded. Relationships between the data were examined using a one way analysis of variance and a chi square interpretation. Anecdotal information from the responding middle school principals, counselors and teachers was examined. The relationship between this study and the results of a 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study was also examined.

Research Questions

There were five research questions which formed the basis of the study:

Question One: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle level schools currently has a sexual harassment policy? In what documents is the policy printed?

Question Two: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle schools currently provides sexual harassment awareness and prevention training? Who receives and provides the training?

Question Three: What is the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem by the principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools? How does that perception compare with the nationally documented magnitude of the problem? How does that perception vary based on whether the educator is a middle level principal, counselor or teacher? In addition, how does that perception vary among educators from small, medium and large districts and schools? How does the perception of the effectiveness of an existing sexual harassment policy vary among middle level principals, counselors and teachers from small, medium and large school districts and schools?

Question Four: How does the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training vary as reported by educators from small, medium and large districts

and schools?

Question Five: What is the relationship between the data collected from the Oklahoma middle level principals, counselors and teachers of this 1999 study with the 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study data from the 249 responding superintendents of Oklahoma's 547 school districts?

Demographic Information of Respondents' Middle Schools

Prior to answering the research questions of this study it would be useful to examine demographic information provided by the respondents. Of the 302 respondents, 93 were middle school principals, 118 middle school counselors and 91 middle school teachers. A slightly higher number of counselors (188) received a survey since there were 376 Oklahoma middle school counselors and every other one was surveyed. In addition, a higher percentage of surveyed middle school counselors (63%) responded than principals or teachers. Fewer middle school teachers (160) received a survey and the lowest response rate (57%) was by teachers.

On the survey the educators indicated the student population of their school district and the population of their middle school. Those numbers were then aggregated into three size groups of school districts and three size groups of middle schools. Group sizes of school districts were small districts defined as those

districts that serviced less than 2,000 students, medium school districts had between 2,000 and 10,000 students and large school districts had more than 10,000 students. Small middle schools serviced fewer than 400 students, medium size middle schools had between 400 and 800 students, while large middle schools served over 800 students. Results are displayed in Table 4.

Table 4
Size of Respondents' School Districts and Schools

School District		
Size	Frequency	Percent
< 2,000	106	35
2,000- 10,000	86	28
>10,000	110	36
School		
Size	Frequency	Percent
< 400	95	31
400- 800	116	38
> 800	91	30

The respondents also indicated the grade configurations of their respective middle schools. Nine different groupings of grades were established, as shown in

Table 5. The most frequent (50%) was the currently favored grade 6 - 8 model. Second in frequency (24%) was the traditional junior high school grouping of grades 7 - 9. These demographics provide baseline information for the study.

Table 5
Grade Configuration of Respondents' Middle Schools

Grades Served	Frequency	Percent
6 - 8	153	50
7 - 9	75	24
7 - 8	16	5
8 - 9	15	5
5 -8	12	4
4 - 8	12	4
6 - 7	7	2
5 - 7	6	2
9	6	2

Existence of Sexual Harassment Policy in Oklahoma's Middle Schools

Data in this section answered the first research question: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle schools currently has a sexual harassment policy? In what documents is the policy printed?

This question was answered from the responses of the middle school principals, counselors and teachers who returned the survey. In this study, 92% of the middle school principals reported that their school had a sexual harassment

policy, 89% of the middle school counselors reported the existence of a policy and 85% of the teachers reported a sexual harassment policy in place at their middle school. Since some of these educators could possibly be on staff at the same school, it can be said that, based on the respondents' survey, approximately nine out of ten Oklahoma middle schools do have a sexual harassment policy. (See Table 6)

Table 6
Response of Oklahoma Middle School Educators
Regarding Existence of Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

Respondents	Number	Yes	No	Percent
Principals	93	86	7	92
Counselors	118	106	12	89
Teachers	91	78	13	85
Total	302	270	32	89

Documentation of Oklahoma's Middle School Sexual Harassment Policies as reported by Principals, Counselors and Teachers

Based upon these responses, it appears that the majority of Oklahoma's middle schools educators report that their school does have a policy in place. The next area examined in the survey regards who receives the policy. In the survey, as shown in Table 7, respondents indicated whether their sexual harassment policy was printed in the student handbook, faculty handbook, parent handbook and/or in the

school district policy handbook. The highest percent (73%) reported the policy located in the school district handbook and the lowest percent (12%) stated that the policy could be found in the parent handbook. Over (64%) of the respondents stated the student handbook held the policy and (38%) of the respondents indicated the faculty handbook contained the sexual harassment policy. Respondents were able to indicate multiple sources of documentation if appropriate.

Table 7
Middle School Educators' Response
Documentation of Sexual Harassment Policy

Document	Frequency	Percent
District Policy Book	221	73
Student Handbook	196	64
Faculty Handbook	117	38
Parent Handbook	38	12

Existence of Sexual Harassment Awareness and Prevention Training in Oklahoma's Middle Schools

Data in this section answered the second research question: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle schools currently provides sexual harassment awareness and prevention training? Who receives and provides the training?

This question was answered from the responses of the middle school principals, counselors and teachers who returned the survey. The first area to be addressed is the existence of sexual harassment training.

Based upon the survey responses, less than half of Oklahoma's middle school educators (45%) report that their school is providing any kind of sexual harassment awareness or prevention training. This is in spite of the strong direction regarding the importance of such training from the United States Department of Education Secretary Richard Riley, the Office for Civil Rights and the clear indication of the importance of this training from previously cited court cases.

The second part of this research question requires additional information about the Oklahoma middle schools' progress in providing sexual harassment training. Who receives and provides the existing training?

Recipients of Sexual Harassment Training in Oklahoma's Middle Schools

Percentages reflected in this section are based upon all 302 respondents, whether or not they indicated that their school provided training. As shown in Table 8, the highest percentage of respondents (36%) indicated that the middle school teachers and the middle school principals (35%) received sexual harassment training, followed by the students (24%). Over 16% of the respondents indicated that the school staff was in serviced on sexual harassment. Only 2% of the

respondents indicated that parents or community members received sexual harassment training through the school.

Table 8
Middle School Educators' Response- Groups Receiving Sexual Harassment Training

Group	Trained	Percent
Teachers	109	36
Administrators	106	35
Students	73	24
Staff	51	16
Parents	7	2
Community Members	6	2
One or more of the above Mentioned Groups	138	45

Providers of Sexual Harassment Training in Oklahoma's Middle Schools

Respondents had a wide array of training providers from which to select, as well as an opportunity to indicate other choices. As shown in Table 9, respondents (22%) indicated the middle school principal as the most frequent leader of the sexual harassment training efforts, followed by the central office personnel (15%) and the

use of a video (14%). The middle school counselors (13%) and outside consultants (9%) were next. Finally, only (7%) of the respondents indicated using the school district attorney and (3%) responded that the school district superintendent led the training.

Table 9
Middle School Educators' Response- Providers of Sexual Harassment Training

Group	Frequency	Percent
Principal	68	22
Central Office	48	15
Video	45	14
Counselor	41	13
Consultant	30	9
School Attorney	22	7
Superintendent	10	3

Perception of the Magnitude of the Sexual Harassment Problem

Data in this section answered the third research question: What is the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem by the principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools? How does that perception compare with the nationally documented magnitude of the problem?

How does the perception of the problem vary based on whether the respondent is a middle school principal, counselor or teacher? In addition, how does that perception vary among educators from small, medium and large districts and schools? How does the perception of the effectiveness of an existing sexual harassment policy vary among middle level principals, counselors and teachers from small, medium and large school districts and schools?

The first two sections of this question are answered drawing upon the demographic information provided on the surveys, (kind of educator, size of school district and school size), and questions constructed on a likert scale of 1 - 9. On the question "Based upon your knowledge, to what degree is sexual harassment a problem in your school," a (1) indicates that it is a small problem in the respondent's middle school, while a (9) would indicate a large problem. Three separate one way analysis of variances examined three different relationships; the relationship between the kind of educator (principal, counselor or teacher) and the perception of the sexual harassment problem, the size of the school district and the educators' perception of the problem and the size of the middle school and the educators' perception of the problem.

Relationship between Kind of Educator and the Perception of the Magnitude of the Sexual Harassment Problem in the Respondent's Middle School

As shown in Table 10, the first data to be examined are the descriptives. The mean score of the principals' perception of the magnitude of the problem (2.53) is the smallest. The counselors' mean score (3.39) is larger than the principals and the teachers' mean (4.05) is greater than both of the other groups of educators. The middle school teachers rated the problem as larger than the counselors. The counselors' perception of the problem was larger than the principals.

Table 10
Descriptives-Kind of Educator and Perception of the Problem

Educator	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Error
Principal	93	2.5376	1.2646	.1311
Counselor	118	3.3983	1.7104	.1575
Teacher	91	4.0549	1.8157	.1903
Total	302	3.3311	1.7223	.911E-2

There were significant differences between the means of the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in the respondent's middle school based upon the kind of educator (principal, counselor or teacher) responding. $F(2, 299) = 20.304$ $p = .000$ The one way analysis of variance results are shown on Table 11.

Table 11
Analysis of Variance
Kind of Educator and Perception of the Problem

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	106.764	53.382	20.304*
Within Groups	299	786.123	2.629	
Total	301	892.887		

Note. * $p < .01$.

Tukey HSD post hoc tests indicate significant differences between all three groups of educators, as shown in Table 12.

Table 12
Tukey HSD- Kind of Educator and Perception of the Problem

(I)Kind of Educator	(J) Kind Of Educator	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Principal	Counselor	-.8607*	.225	.000
	Teacher	-1.5173*	.239	.000
Counselor	Principal	.8607*	.225	.000
	Teacher	-.6566*	.226	.010
Teacher	Principal	1.5173*	.239	.000
	Counselor	.6566*	.226	.010

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Based upon all of the collected data, descriptives, ANOVA and the post hoc tests, it can be said that the middle school principals perceived the problem as much smaller than the other two groups. In addition, the middle school counselors indicated that the problem was smaller than the teachers. The teachers, those in closest proximity to the students on a regular basis, rated the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment significantly higher than both the counselors and principals. There were significant differences between the mean scores of all three groups of educators. The teachers gave the highest rating to the problem of sexual harassment, the counselors were next and the principals gave the problem its lowest rating.

Relationship between the School District Size and the Educators' Perception of the Magnitude of the Sexual Harassment Problem

Descriptive data demonstrates the differences in the mean scores, by district size, as shown in Table 13. The mean score of the small district educators' perception of the problem (2.66) is the smallest. The mid-size district educators had a larger mean score (3.66) than previously noted district respondents. The large district educators had the largest mean score (3.70) of the perception of the problem.

Table 13
Descriptives- District Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

District Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
< 2,000	106	2.6689	1.4324	.1391
2,000 - 10,000	86	3.6628	1.6776	.1809
> 10,000	110	3.7091	1.8342	.1749
Total	302	3.3311	1.7223	9.911E-02

There were significant differences between the means of the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in the respondent's middle school based upon the size of the school district. $F(2, 299) = 13.020$ $p = .000$ The one way analysis of variance results are listed in Table 14.

Table 14
Analysis of Variance
District Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	71.532	35.766	13.020*
Within Groups	299	821.355	2.747	
Total	301	892.887		

Note: * $p < .01$

Tukey HSD post hoc tests (see Table 15) indicate that there were significant mean differences regarding perception of the problem between the small school districts and the other two categories. There was not a significant mean difference between the mid-size and the large school districts.

Table 15
Tukey HSD- District Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

(I) Size of District	(J) Size of District	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
< 2,000	2,000-10,000	-.9930*	.241	.000
	> 10,000	-1.0393*	.226	.000
2,000 - 10,000	< 2,000	.9930*	.241	.000
	> 10,000	-4.63E-02	.239	.979
> 10,000	< 2,000	1.0393*	.226	.000
	2,000 - 10,000-	4.630E-02	.239	.979

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Based upon all of the collected data it can be said that the middle school educators from the smallest school districts, (student populations of less than 2,000), had a mean rating of perception of the sexual harassment problem significantly less than the respondents from the other two categories of school district size. There were no significant differences between the means of the perception of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment between the mid-size school districts, (student populations 2,000 - 10,000) and the larger school districts (student population greater than 10,000).

Relationship between Middle School Size and the Educators' Perception of the Magnitude of the Sexual Harassment Problem

For this analysis, a small school was defined as having a student population of less than 400 students, a medium size middle school serviced between 400 and 800 students, while a large school had over 800 students. As shown in Table 16, data indicated that the lowest mean score of perception of the problem (2.68) was from the small school respondents. Next in size was the medium school educators (3.31), followed by the largest mean score (4.02) from the large school respondents.

Table 16
Descriptives - School Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

School Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
< 400	95	2.6842	1.4965	.1535
400 - 800	116	3.3190	1.6184	.1503
> 800	91	4.0220	1.8195	.1907
Total	302	3.3311	1.7223	9.911E-02

As shown in Table 17, the one way analysis of variance indicated significant differences between the means of the perception of the magnitude of the sexual

harassment problem in the respondent's middle school based upon the size of that middle school. $F(2, 299) = 15.363$ $p = .000$

Table 17
Analysis of Variance
School Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	83.207	41.603	15.363*
Within Groups	299	809.681	2.708	
Total	301	892.887		

Note: * $p < .01$

Tukey HSD post hoc tests indicate that there were significant differences between the mean scores of all three school sizes. Results are listed in Table 18.

Table 18
Tukey HSD- School Size and Educators' Perception of the Problem

(I) Size of School	(J) Size of School	Mean Difference (I - J)	St. Error	Sig.
< 400	400 - 800	-.6348*	.228	.015
	> 800	-1.3378*	.241	.000
400 - 800	< 400	.6348*	.228	.015
	> 800	-.7030*	.230	.006
> 800	< 400	1.3378*	.241	.000
	400 - 800	.7030*	.230	.006

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Based upon the descriptive data, the one way ANOVA and the post hoc tests, it can be said that the larger the school, the larger the perception of the magnitude of the problem as rated by the responding middle school educators. Furthermore, there is a significant difference between the means of all three school sizes on the respondents' perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem in their school. In summary, the larger the school, the greater the perception of the problem by the middle school educators.

Oklahoma Educators' Perception of the Magnitude of the Problem and the Nationally Documented Magnitude of the Problem

The study also examined the relationship between the Oklahoma educators' perception of the sexual harassment problem with the nationally documented problem of sexual harassment. National, state and regional surveys conducted with thousands of students indicate that young people view sexual harassment as a daily occurrence that impacts their ability to learn (AAUW, 1993; Kraus, 1996; Pera, 1996; Turner, 1995). Four out of five young people in a national survey self-report their victimization of sexual harassment (AAUW, 1993). Yet, the middle school principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's schools rate the sexual harassment problem in their schools as generally a (3) on a scale of 1 - 9. It does appear that the teachers, closer in proximity and in daily contact with the students, had a mean rating of the problem (4.00) significantly higher than the principals and counselors. The counselors, in turn, (3.39) rated the problem significantly higher than the principals (2.53).

Size of school district and school also has an impact on the respondents' perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem. There were significant mean differences between perception of the problem between the small districts and the two larger group sizes of school districts. The small district respondents rated the problem lower than the respondents from the other two district size categories.

School size, however, presented significant mean differences between all three size schools. The larger the school, the larger the perception of the sexual harassment problem.

As a predominately rural state, Oklahoma has a large number of extremely small schools and small school districts. In its attempt to meet the needs of children who live in sparsely populated areas, Oklahoma has a surprising 547 school districts. This is an extremely large number of districts considering the total population of Oklahoma. Research focused on the special needs and challenges of rural schools in the area of sexual harassment policies and training is needed.

Perception of the Effectiveness of the Existing Sexual Harassment Policy

The third research question also explores the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy. This question is answered drawing upon the demographic information provided on the surveys, (kind of educator, district size and school size), and a question constructed on a likert scale of 1 - 9. On the question "What is your perception of the effectiveness of your school's sexual harassment policy," a (1) indicated that the policy was not effective and a (9) indicated that it was very effective. This question was answered based upon the responses of 270 middle school educators, since 32 of the respondents reported that their school did not have a sexual harassment policy.

Three separate one way analysis of variances examined three different relationships; the relationship between the kind of educator and the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy, the size of the school district and the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy and the size of the middle school and the perception of the effectiveness of the policy.

Relationship between the Kind of Educator and the Perception of the Effectiveness of the Middle School's Sexual Harassment Policy

The descriptive data yield information on the mean and the standard deviation of the three groups of educators' perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy at their school, as shown in Table 19. Mean scores of the principals (6.19), counselors (5.85) and the teachers (5.73) are relatively close to each other.

Table 19
Descriptives- Kind of Educator and Perception of Effectiveness of Policy

Educator	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Principal	86	6.1977	2.1355	.2303
Counselor	106	5.8585	2.2905	.2225
Teacher	78	5.7308	1.9651	.2225
Total	270	5.9296	2.1519	.1310

As seen in Table 20, the one way ANOVA revealed that there were no significant differences between the means of the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy based upon if the respondent was a principal, counselor or teacher.

Table 20
Analysis of Variance
Kind of Educator and Perception of the Effectiveness of the Policy

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	9.800	4.900	1.059
Within Groups	267	1235.863	4.629	
Total	269	1245.663		

No significant mean differences

While there was no significant mean differences of the ratings of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy based upon the kind of educator, all three of these groups of educators aggregated rated the policy as effective. The mean rating was 5.92 on a likert scale of 1 - 9. The principals' mean rating (6.19) was slightly higher than the other two groups.

Relationship Between the Size of the School District and the Educators' Perception of the Effectiveness of the Middle School's Sexual Harassment Policy

Data, shown in Table 21, indicate that the mid-size districts (5.39) had the lowest mean perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy. The highest mean perception of the effectiveness of the problem (6.28) was by the large district respondents and the small district respondents mean perception (5.94) was in the middle of the others.

Table 21
Descriptives- District Size and Educators' Perception of Effectiveness of the Policy

District Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
< 2,000	90	5.9444	2.1006	.2214
2,000 - 10,000	73	5.3973	2.2407	.2622
> 10,000	107	6.2804	2.0777	.2009
Total	270	5.9296	2.1519	.1310

Table 22 displays that based upon a one way ANOVA there were significant differences between the means of perception of the effectiveness of the middle

school's sexual harassment policy and the size of the reporting school district.

$F(2, 267) = 3.732 \quad p < .05$

Table 22
Analysis of Variance
District Size and Perception of Effectiveness of the Policy

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	33.873	16.936	3.732*
Within Groups	267	211.790	4.539	
Total	269	1245.663		

Note: * $p < .05$

Tukey HSD post hoc tests indicate that the significant difference is between the medium size school districts (student population 2,000 - 10,000) and the large districts (student population greater than 10,000). Results are listed in Table 23.

Table 23
Tukey HSD- District Size and Perception of the Effectiveness of the Policy

(I) Size of District	(J) Size of District	Mean Difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.
< 2,000	2,000 -10,000	.5472	.336	.233
	> 10,000	-.3359	.305	.513
2,000- 10,00	< 2,000	-.5472	.336	.233
	> 10,000	-.8831*	.323	.017
> 10,000	< 2,000	.3359	.305	.513
	2,000- 10,000	.8831*	.323	.017

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The medium size school districts' respondents saw the policy as less effective than both the small district and large district respondents. There was a significant difference in the means between the mid-size district and the large school district respondents.

Relationship between the Size of the Middle School and the Educators' Perception of the Effectiveness of the Middle School's Sexual Harassment Policy

Descriptive data indicate that the largest mean perception of the effectiveness of the school's sexual harassment policy (6.20) was from the educators of the large schools. The small school respondents had next mean score (6.00) and the mid-size

schools (5.63) reported the lowest mean rating of the perception of the policy's effectiveness. See Table 24 for results.

Table 24
Descriptives- School Size and educators' Perception of Effectiveness of Policy

School Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
< 400	82	6.0000	2.0608	.2276
400 - 800	100	5.6300	2.1911	.2191
> 800	88	6.2045	2.1717	.2315
Total	270	5.9296	2.1519	.1310

A one way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in the means of perception of the effectiveness of the middle school's sexual harassment policy based upon the size of the respondents' school. (See Table 25)

Table 25
Analysis of Variance
School Size and Educators'Perception of Effectiveness of the Policy

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Between Groups	2	16.035	8.017	1.741
Within Groups	267	1229.628	4.605	
Total	269	1245.663		

No significant mean differences

While there were no significant mean differences in the rating of the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy based upon school size, respondents from all three size groups of middle schools rated the policy as effective. The mean of rating was 5.92 on the likert scale of 1 to 9. The large school respondents (6.20) rated it slightly higher than the other two groups of educators.

Relationship between the Size of School District and School with the Existence of Sexual Harassment Policy and Training

Data in this section answered the fourth research question: How does the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training vary as reported by educators from small, medium and large districts and schools?

A Chi-square analysis was conducted on the data regarding school district size and the existence of a sexual harassment policy, school size and the existence of a policy, size of the school district and existence of sexual harassment awareness and prevention training and the school size and the existence of training. The researcher wanted to know whether small, medium or large districts and schools were more likely than expected to have policies and/or training in place. The chi-square tested whether the observed frequencies of existing sexual harassment policies and training at different size districts and schools differed significantly from the expected frequencies.

Size of School District and Existence of Sexual Harassment Policy

The independent variable, school district size, was used to test whether the observed frequency of the existence of a sexual harassment policy differed significantly from the expected frequency. As shown in Table 26, the observed frequencies between

the various school districts sizes did have pair-wise significant differences. School respondents from the large school districts (more than 10,000 students) were more likely than expected to report that a sexual harassment policy was in place at their school. Respondents from the small and mid-size districts were less likely than expected to be operating under the parameters of a sexual harassment policy.

$\tilde{x}$ (2, N = 302) = 8.893, p < .05

Table 26
Chi-square- District Size and Existence of Policy

District Size		Policy Yes	No	n
< 2,000	Observed Count	91	15	106
	Expected Count	94.8	11.2	106
2,000-10,000	Observed Count	73	13	86
	Expected Count	76.9	9.1	86
> 10,000	Observed Count	106	4	110
	Expected Count	98.3	11.7	110
Chi-square		Value	df	(2-sided)
Pearson		8.893	2	.012

Middle School Size and Existence of Sexual Harassment Policy

The independent variable, school size, was used to test whether the observed frequency of the existence of a sexual harassment policy differed significantly from the expected frequency of schools with a policy. There were significant pair-wise differences between the observed and expected frequencies of policies based on school size, (see Table 27) with the large schools more likely to have a sexual harassment policy than would be expected. $\tilde{x}$ (2, N=302) = 7.551, $p < .05$

Table 27
Chi-square- School Size and Existence of Policy

School Size		Policy Yes	No	n
< 400	Observed Count	83	12	95
	Expected Count	84.9	10.1	95
400 - 800	Observed Count	99	17	116
	Expected Count	103.7	12.3	116
> 800	Observed Count	88	3	91
	Expected Count	81.4	9.6	91
Chi Square		Value	df	(2-sided)
Pearson		7.551	2	.023

Size of the School District and Existence of Sexual Harassment Training

The independent variable, size of the school district, was used to test whether the observed frequency of the existence of sexual harassment training differed significantly from the expected frequency. As shown in Table 28, there were significant pair-wise differences between the observed frequencies of training and the expected frequencies of training based on the district size. The observed frequency at the small and mid-size districts was less than the expected frequency. The large school district observed frequency was significantly greater than expected. The large school district educators were more likely to report a sexual harassment training component in place at their school than would be expected.

$\tilde{x}$ (2, $\underline{N}$=302) = 26.126, $p < .05$

Table 28
Chi-Square- District Size and Existence of Training

Size of District		Training Yes	No	Total
< 2,000	Observed Count	33	73	106
	Expected Count	48.4	57.6	106
2,000 - 10,000	Observed Count	34	52	86
	Expected Count	39.3	46.7	86
> 10,000	Observed Count	71	39	110
	Expected Count	50.3	59.7	110
Chi-Square		Value	df	(2-sided)
Pearson		26.126	2	.000

Middle School Size and Existence of Sexual Harassment Training

The independent variable, school size, was used to test whether the observed frequency of the existence of sexual harassment training differed significantly from the expected frequency. As shown in Table 29, there were significant pair-wise differences between the observed and expected frequencies. In the small and medium size schools, the observed frequency was less than the expected. In the large schools, however, the observed frequency of sexual harassment training was larger than the expected. The large schools were more likely to have a sexual harassment component in place in their schools. $\tilde{x}$ (2, N=302) = 17.787, $p < .05$

Table 29
Chi-square- School Size and Existence of Training

School Size		Training Yes	No	Total
< 400	Observed Count	33	62	95
	Expected Count	43.4	51.6	95
400 - 800	Observed Count	47	69	116
	Expected Count	53	63	116
> 800	Observed Count	58	33	91
	Expected Count	41.6	49.4	91
Chi-Square		Value	df	(2-sided)
Pearson		17.787	2	.000

Qualitative Data

Respondents were provided with the following opportunity at the end of the survey instrument: "Please make any additional comments regarding the policy, training sessions, magnitude of the sexual harassment problem or effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy at your school." Eighty-three of the respondents commented on the sexual harassment situation at their school. Five major themes emerged from the educators' responses.

Themes from Educators' Comments

Sexual Harassment is a Significant Problem

Sexual harassment is a significant problem at the middle school. According to the respondents, the problem is mostly student-to-student sexual harassment. A middle school teacher states, "There is a great deal of student touching in the hallways. Both boys and girls are aggressive to each other. The students don't seem to consider it harassment and the touching is so rampant, it is impossible to control it." One teacher reports, "Believe it or not, lots of girls are propositioning boys." A problem identified by one teacher is student-to-student remarks calling another student "gay." Another teacher writes, "We are seeing more problems. This year it has been more about males calling each other 'gay.' Some problems were not just jokes." A counselor tells the following story: "This has not been a problem in our school until this year. We have had two pretty serious incidents. Consequently we have upped our awareness and materials and counseling techniques."

One counselor states that girls and boys are coming in with terrible amounts of verbal abuse as well as touching inappropriately, while another counselor says that sexual harassment is frequent among 7th graders. One middle school counselor tells of dealing with some kind of sexual harassment each week. "Lack of respect is a big problem throughout our school" writes another counselor. A principal states, "Middle

schoolers struggle with appropriate sexual behavior. It is particularly significant that we provide both modeling and instruction to prevent sexual harassment!" One counselor believes that more students experience sexual harassment than actually report it.

Policies and Training Make a Difference

The existence of a sexual harassment policy and training component on campus does make a positive difference in student behavior. "Students do respond when they become aware of what sexual harassment is. I see a reduction in referrals of this nature after classroom guidance regarding respect of others rights and sexual harassment," tells one counselor. Another counselor feels that they have a good policy and consequently sexual harassment has not been a "real big" problem there. "Once students are made aware of our policy and the consequences, we usually find that it deters the problem," states another counselor. "Our school hasn't had very many reported incidents of sexual harassment. The reports we have had are dealt with swiftly and with serious consequences if the harassment continues. So far, this has kept the problem under control," relates a middle school principal.

Not Enough is Being Done

Many of the Oklahoma educators surveyed expressed that not enough is being done at their school or school district to prevent sexual harassment. One principal says that ongoing training is needed each year, while another states that education and severe punishment for violators needs to be consistent throughout all school systems. A counselor writes that more awareness is necessary. A first year counselor expresses a need for more training. Another counselor obtained sexual harassment literature from the state department at the principal's request, but the material was not used. "All staff members need to be aware of practical procedures and students need to learn what sexual harassment is and the consequences of not abiding by polices," states another counselor. One respondent states that the school is re-active rather than pro-active.

Need for Training

Several educators wrote of the need to periodically train the students and staff in responding to sexual harassment situations. One teacher even told of her school district "covering up" the problem. Another says the problem is ignored and overlooked, even laughed about. Several teachers expressed the need for staff and student education in this area. Respondents write that their school is not doing an

adequate job of establishing policies and/or training the students and staff in sexual harassment awareness and prevention. "As adults, most of us know right and wrong. Students have to be reminded," summarizes one Oklahoma counselor. "Children need to be informed. They don't know what is right or wrong and therefore don't know how to say STOP," explains a teacher.

Some Schools Have an Effective Plan

Some schools, however, already have an effective plan in effect. One principal writes:

> We are lucky to live and work in an area where parents are involved to a large degree with their children and their education. Our community is very supportive of our harassment policy. We meet with students and explain the policy, give examples and make sure everyone understands the policy and why it is in effect. In all middle schools, the children are becoming aware of their sexuality and sometimes behave in inappropriate ways. We try to educate them in this area.

A counselor states that rules and policies act as deterrents. Continuing, the educator explains that if a student is referred for sexual harassment, the principal reviews the policy and does a lot of processing with the student. "If this is clearly a sexual harassment issue, the procedures are followed exactly as the policy is written." Another counselor states that once students are made aware of the policy and the consequences, they usually find that it deters the problem. One respondent states that the school's policy is "clear, consequences fairly given. The problem, when it occurs,

is addressed seriously and those concerned understand we have no tolerance." Several educators state that they have a good policy and that consequently sexual harassment has not been a "real big" problem. One teacher writes, "We take a hard line on this and therefore there aren't too many incidents." Yet, another teacher cautions, the "effectiveness of the policy is related to enforcement by the administrators."

Schools Make Plans for 1999-2000

It appears that many schools are now preparing to address the issue in a more meaningful way. Respondents report that the policy will be more detailed in the 1999-2000 handbook, that they'll probably have a training session next year, and one counselor writes that the school plans to implement, during the 1999-2000 school year, a comprehensive program to help the students understand the unique worth of every individual- to include a unit on sexual harassment.

The comments by these Oklahoma middle school educators substantiate the problem of sexual harassment in their schools and express their concern about its prevention. They describe the inappropriate and hurtful behaviors exhibited mostly from students to other students. Those educators who work at a school with sexual harassment policies and training cite the positive difference that these steps have made in the behavior of the students. While some schools have effective sexual harassment policies and training sessions in effect, much more needs to be done at other sites.

According to the respondents, several schools will take decisive action at the beginning of the 1999-2000 school year. The educator respondents appear to have, for the most part, an understanding of the problem and the impact it has on young people. They also appear to be most interested in providing a safe, nurturing learning environment for the young adolescents they serve.

Additional Analysis of Principal, Counselor and Teacher Comments

To further examine the educators' comments, the researcher coded each of the comments as either a *one*, *two*, or a *three*. A rating of *one* categorized that the respondent indicated sexual harassment was not a significant problem at the school. Such a response might be that "a sexual harassment policy is not really necessary in our district at this time." A scoring of *two* indicated a neutral response. An example of a two would be simply stating that a policy exists and things are "handled fairly" at the school. A *three* indicated that the respondent saw a need for improvement or stated a real concern about the problem. "Girls and boys are coming in with terrible amounts of verbal abuse as well as touching inappropriately" is an example of a *three*. A few additional examples are as follows:

Rating: One

Principal- Our school hasn't had very many reported incidents of sexual harassment. The reports we have had are dealt with swiftly with serious consequences if the harassment continues. So far, this has kept the problem under control.

Counselor- I've not encountered any harassment of any kind at my school, either as an educator or that a student has mentioned to me.

Teacher- Not really a problem in rural setting.

Rating: Two

Principal- I have attached a copy of the student handbook section on sexual harassment.

Counselor- Policy will be more detailed in '99-'00 handbooks.

Teacher- Effectiveness of policy is related to enforcement of administrators.

Rating: Three

Principal- This is a very common problem in our society. Ongoing education and severe punishment for violators needs to be consistent throughout all school systems.

Counselor- I deal with some kind of sexual harassment each week.

Teacher- There is a great deal of student touching in the hallways. Both boys and girls are aggressive to each other. The students don't seem to consider it harassment and the touching is so rampant, it is impossible to control it.

As a group, the principals' comments were more reserved and pragmatic about the sexual harassment problem. Counselors, the most verbal of the groups, had the highest percent of respondent comments. The teachers, however, painted the most vivid picture of actions and behaviors that concerned them. Teachers observe the students' behavior and exchanges each day during class change, upon entering and exiting the classroom and during the class period. Table 30 reports the number of comments, by the kind of educator, into the three categories.

Table 30
Rating of Qualitative Data

Educator	Surveyed	Responses	Rating of Comments 1	2	3
Principals	155	13	1	9	4
Counselors	188	46	3	26	17
Teachers	160	23	3	10	10

Note: 1 = little problem, 2 = neutral response, 3 = concern about the problem

Relationship Between the Pilot Study Data and Current Study Data

Data in this section answered the fifth research question: What is the relationship between data collected from the Oklahoma middle level principals, counselors and teachers of this 1999 study with the 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study data collected from the 249 responding superintendents of Oklahoma's 547 school districts?

This question can only be answered by again examining the prior four research questions with the inclusion of data obtained from pilot study of Oklahoma's school superintendents. Each of the first four research questions was again studied with this additional data.

Question one: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle level schools

currently has a sexual harassment policy? In what documents is the policy printed?

Existence of Policy

While the current study poses the question directed at the respondent's school location, the superintendents responded according to the existence of a district policy. Given this important difference, the information is still enlightening. Over 86% of the Oklahoma superintendents surveyed in 1998 indicated that their district had a sexual harassment policy. The total percentage (89%) of this study's respondents indicated that their school had a sexual harassment policy. The similarity is striking. Based upon this combined data, it appears that over 85% of Oklahoma middle school sites operate within the parameters of a sexual harassment policy.

Documentation of Policy

The second part of the first research question refers to the location of the policy's documentation and the subsequent implication of who receives the policy. The pilot study assumed that the policy was printed in the district policy book, so that document was not listed as an option. As shown in Table 31, a much higher percentage of the reporting superintendents indicated documentation of the policy for faculty (66%) and parents (31%) than did the middle school principals, counselors and

teachers. It can be speculated that superintendents considered that district policy books, especially at small district sites, are accessible to students, faculty and parents.

Table 31
Documentation of Policy- Comparison of 1998 Pilot Study Data with 1999 Study

Document	1998 Pilot Study	1999 Study
Student Handbook	60%	64%
Faculty Handbook	63%	38%
Parent Handbook	31%	12%

Question Two: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle schools currently provides sexual harassment awareness and prevention training? Who receives and provides the training?

Existence of Training

Again it must be noted that the superintendents were responding to the question of their district, as opposed to a particular school site. The responses of the 1998 superintendents were, however, similar to the 1999 study of building site educators. Forty-one percent of the superintendents and 45% of the site educators indicated that sexual harassment training was conducted at their location. This indicates that one or more groups of stakeholders received the training.

Also indicated were the specific school groups (administrators, teachers, staff, students and parents) who received training. The category of community members was added to the 1999 study. Comparisons of survey data regarding groups receiving training is listed in Table 32. The survey instrument used in the 1998 pilot study of Oklahoma superintendents only asked for qualitative responses regarding providers of the training. Therefore, comparison data is not available in this area.

Table 32
Recipients of Training- Comparison of 1998 Pilot Study Data with 1999 Study

Study	Teachers	Principals	Students	Staff	Parents	*Total
1998 Supts.	38 %	39%	22 %	32%	4%	41%
1999 Educators	36%	35%	24%	16%	2%	45%

* Total- Percent of Respondents who reported that at least one group receives training

Question Three: What is the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem by the principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools? How does that perception compare with the nationally documented magnitude of the problem? How does that perception vary based upon whether that educator is a middle level principal, counselor or teacher? In addition, how does that perception vary among educators from small, medium and large districts and schools?

How does the perception of the effectiveness of an existing sexual harassment policy vary among middle level principals, counselors and teachers from small, medium and large school districts and schools?

Perception of the Problem

Relationships between this study's data and the 1998 pilot study data are confined to only parts of this question, as the size of school and kind of educator were not on the pilot study instrument. In addition, the question regarding perception of the effectiveness of the existing sexual harassment policy was not on the pilot study survey. Both studies examined the perception of the problem of the respondents. In the current study there were significant differences in the mean scores of the principals, counselors and teachers. $F(2,299) = 20.304$ $p = .00$ The teachers rated the problem the highest, followed by the counselor and then the principals. Of great interest is the fact that the superintendents' mean score of perception of the problem (2.04) was even lower than the principals, counselors and teachers. This re-enforces the concept of proximity. Those educators closest to the students on a daily basis (teachers) rated the problem of sexual harassment with a mean (4.05) higher than the other three categories of educators (superintendents, principals and counselors). The educator furthest from the students on a daily basis (superintendents) rated the problem of sexual harassment with the lowest mean score.

District Size and Perception of the Problem

The relationship between the two studies' data is complimentary. In the pilot study there were significant mean differences in the perception of the magnitude of the problem between superintendents of the smallest districts (student population under 500) and medium to large districts (student population greater than 500). $F(1,247) = 22.39$ $p = .00$ The superintendents of the large districts had a significantly higher mean perception of the problem than the small district superintendents. In the 1999 study of middle school educators, district size (three categories) also presented significant mean differences in the perception of the problem. $F(2, 299) = 13.020$ $p = .00$ The 1999 study had the medium and large school districts closer together, with the mean perception of the problem from small school districts significantly smaller. This once again affirms the pilot study data results that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of small school district respondents regarding the problem of sexual harassment and the mean scores of medium to large school district respondents. Respondents from small school districts rate the sexual harassment problem as smaller.

Question Four : How does the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training vary as reported by educators from small, medium and large districts and

schools?

The relationship between the pilot study and the 1999 study can only be established regarding district size, not school size. The 1998 pilot study of Oklahoma superintendents displayed only two district sizes, small (< 500 students) and large (> 500 students). This study included three sizes of school districts, small (< 2,000), medium (2,000 - 10,000) and large (> 10,000). A chi-square analysis was conducted on the pilot study data using the demographic data of district size as the independent variable for the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training. This data was then compared to the current study data.

Relationship Between School District Size and

Existence of Sexual Harassment Policy

Comparison of 1998 Pilot Study Data and the 1999 Study Data

Chi-square analysis on data from both studies indicated significant pair-wise differences between the district's observed frequency of the existence of a policy and the expected frequency based on district size. In both studies the larger districts were more likely than expected to have a sexual harassment policy.

Both of the studies, the 1998 survey of Oklahoma school superintendents and the 1999 study of middle school educators, presented the impact that school district size has on the likelihood of the existence of a sexual harassment policy. Only 81% of

the 1998 small district superintendent respondents from the pilot study reported the existence of a policy. That contrasted with over 96% of the 1999 large district respondents reporting a policy. It must be noted, however, that a year had passed since the pilot study (1998) was conducted. This may account for an increased percentage of districts with a sexual harassment policy in place during the 1999 study. Data from both studies, however, indicate that the smaller school districts are less likely to have a sexual harassment policy. A higher percentage of the small district respondents of the 1999 study report they still do not have a policy in place.

Table 33
1998 and 1999- District Size and Existence of Policy

Pilot Study Respondents* 1998 Superintendents		Current Study Respondents** 1999 Middle School Educators	
District Size	Policy	District Size	Policy
< 500	81%	< 2,000	85%
500 and over	91%	2,000 - 10,000	84%
		> 10,000	96%
All	86%	All	89%

Note: * N = 247 ** N = 302

Relationship between District Size and

the Existence of Sexual Harassment Training

Comparison of 1998 Pilot Study Data with 1999 Study Data

In both of the studies there is a strong relationship between the size of the school district and the likelihood of sexual harassment training occurring at the school. Small school districts are much less likely to provide such training. Chi-square analysis on both studies' data indicated significant pair-wise differences between the district's observed frequency of providing training and the expected frequency based on district size. In both studies the larger districts were more likely to have sexual harassment training than expected.

The data can also be analyzed by observing percentages, as in Table 34. Number of districts in each size category for the 1998 pilot study were; 108 small districts (< 500 students) and 107 medium to large districts (500 and over) . Number of districts in each size category for the 1999 study; 106 small districts (< 2,000 students), 86 medium size districts (2,000 - 10,000 students) and 110 large districts (> 10,000 students).

Table 34
Percent of Districts by Size - Existence of Training

Pilot Study Respondents 1998 Superintendents		Current Study Respondents 1999 Middle School Educators	
District Size	Training	District Size	Training
< 500	28%	< 2,000	31%
500 and over	54%	2,000 - 10,000	39%
		> 10,000	64%

Summary of Comparison of Data of Two Studies

Examination of the data collected in the 1998 Pilot Study of Oklahoma's school district superintendents reinforces the findings of the data collected in the current study. Although the pilot study did not include three kinds of educators or any information regarding school size, those pieces of data that can be compared are complementary.

Chapter Summary

This chapter gave the results of the study. It included a brief summary of the procedures used to collect the data. Demographics of the kinds of educators who

responded to the survey, respondents' school district size, middle school size and the grades served in the middle schools were reported. The existence of a sexual harassment policy and in what documents it is printed were examined. The existence of sexual harassment awareness and prevention training, who receives and provides the training, as reported by middle school principals, counselors and teachers, was recorded for analysis.

The relationship between the respondents' perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem was examined with the kind of educator, size of the school district and size of the school using a way one ANOVA. The relationship between the respondents' perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy was also examined with the kind of educator, size of the school district and the size of school using a way one ANOVA.

A chi-square analysis examined the relationship between the size of the school district and the size of the school with the existence of a sexual harassment policy. In addition, a chi-square analysis examined the relationship between the size of the school district and the size of the school with the existence of sexual harassment training.

Qualitative data by the respondents on the survey instrument were recorded Finally, each of the first four research questions were again examined to compare the data collected in a 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study of Oklahoma superintendents with the 1999 study data.

Chapter 5 will present a discussion of the results of the study and

recommendations for future research and application to practice.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter reviews the purpose of the study, the research questions addressed and the procedures used to conduct the research. Next, major findings reported in Chapter 4 and conclusions based on those findings are given. The contributions of the findings and conclusions of this study to the literature on sexual harassment in the educational setting follows. Finally, the implications and recommendations are made based on the results of this study.

Review of the Study

The main purpose of this study was twofold: (1) to determine if Oklahoma's middle schools have established a school policy to address sexual harassment issues; and, (2) To determine if Oklahoma's middle schools are providing sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. Five questions guided this study:

Question One: What percentage of Oklahoma's 311 middle level schools currently has a sexual harassment policy? In what documents is the policy printed?

Question Two: What percentage of Oklahoma's middle schools currently

provides sexual harassment awareness and prevention training? Who receives and provides the training?

Question Three: What is the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem by the principals, counselors and teachers of Oklahoma's middle level schools? How does that perception compare with the nationally documented magnitude of the problem? How does that perception vary based on whether the educator is a middle level principal, counselor or teacher? In addition, how does that perception vary among educators from small, medium and large school districts and schools? How does the perception of the effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy vary among middle level principals, counselors and teachers from small, medium and large school districts and schools?

Question Four: How does the existence of a sexual harassment policy and training vary as reported by educators from small, medium and large school districts and schools?

Question Five: What is the relationship between the data collected from the Oklahoma middle school principals, counselors and teachers of this 1999 study and the 1998 (Dzialo) pilot study data collected from 249 superintendents of Oklahoma's 547 school districts?

The population of this study was composed of 155 middle school principals, 188 middle school counselors and 160 middle school teachers in the state of

Oklahoma. This represents a random sampling of the middle school educators in the state. After a second request was mailed, 60% of the principals, 63% of the counselors and 57% of the teachers responded. Number of responses from the three groups of educators was 93 principals, 118 counselors and 91 teachers, for a total of 302 responses. They provided data on the student population of their school district, the population of their middle school and the grades served in their school. They answered questions regarding their school's sexual harassment policy, training, perception of the problem and effectiveness of the sexual harassment policy. Many of the educators added comments and over twenty respondents included a copy of their sexual harassment policy.

Major Findings

This study attempted to identify to what extent Oklahoma middle schools had developed sexual harassment policies and where those policies were documented. It also attempted to determine if sexual harassment awareness and prevention training was in place in Oklahoma's middle schools. If so, who provides the training and who receives the training? The major findings for each of the five research questions are presented in this section.

Sexual Harassment Policy

The Oklahoma middle school educators who responded to the survey reported that the majority of the schools did, in fact, have a sexual harassment policy in place. A surprising 89% of the responding principals, counselors and teachers indicated that their school had such a policy.

The respondents reported in which school documents the sexual harassment policy appeared. The percentages of educators who indicated that the policy was printed in the school district policy book (73%), student handbook (64%), faculty handbook (38%) and in the parent handbook (12%) clearly demonstrate that the policy is formal and is written and dispersed to the stakeholders.

Sexual Harassment Training

Based upon the survey responses, less than half of Oklahoma's middle school educators (45%) reported that their school provided any kind of sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. Of the 138 respondents who reported the existence of sexual harassment training in their school, each educator indicated which groups of the school or school community received the training. At the following percentages, the educators indicated that teachers (36%), administrators (35%), students (24%), staff (16%), parents (2%) and community members (2%) benefited

from the sexual harassment training. Also of interest was information regarding the providers of that training. The response percentages of the 138 educators with a policy indicated that principals (22%), central office personnel (15%), use of videos (14%), counselors (13%), consultants (9%), school attorneys (7%) and school superintendents (3%) provided the training.

Perception of the Problem

Each of the middle school educators responded to a likert scale question (1 - 9) to indicate his/her perception of the magnitude of the problem. Using a one way ANOVA, significant mean differences between the principals, counselors and the teachers scores were identified. Post hoc tests demonstrated that the means of all three groups were significantly different. The teachers perceived the problem as the largest, the counselors were second and the principals perception of the problem was the smallest.

The respondents' school districts were grouped according to size. Large districts served over 10,000 students, medium size districts had between 2,000 - 10,000 students and the small school districts served under 2,000 students. Using a one way ANOVA, significant mean differences regarding perception of the problem emerged.

Post hoc tests revealed that the educators from the small school districts

perceived the problem of sexual harassment as significantly less than the respondents from the medium and large school districts. There were no significant differences between the means of the perception of the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment between the mid-size school districts and the large school districts. The middle schools of the respondents were also grouped according to size. Small schools indicated that less than 400 students attended, medium size schools served between 400 and 800 students and large middle schools had over 800 students. Again using a one way ANOVA, significant differences in the mean ratings of the educators' perception of the magnitude of the problem were identified according to the size of the educators' school. Post hoc tests indicated that there were significant differences between the mean scores of all three school sizes and that the larger the school, the larger the perception of the magnitude of the problem.

National Survey Data and Current Study Data

National, state and regional surveys conducted with thousands of students indicate that young people view sexual harassment as a problem that impacts their daily life (AAUW, 1993; Kraus, 1996; Pera, 1996; Turner, 1995). Four out of five young people in a study commissioned by the American Association of University Women self-reported their own victimization of sexual harassment. Over 85% of the girls and 76% of the boys said they had experienced at least one type of sexual

harassment (AAUW, 1993). The Oklahoma middle school principals, counselors and teachers of this study, however, only rated the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment as a (3) on a scale of 1 to 9.

Perception of the Effectiveness of the Sexual Harassment Policy

Of the 302 middle school educator respondents, 270 reported the existence of a sexual harassment policy at their school. On the likert scale of 1 to 9, the educators rated the effectiveness of their policy at a mean score of (5.9). The one way ANOVA revealed no significant mean differences between the three groups of educators' ratings. The principals (6.19), counselors (5.85) and teachers (5.73) all rated the effectiveness of the policy above the mid-point on the scale. The mean rating score of the mid-size school district respondents on the effectiveness of the policy was significantly lower than either the small district or large district respondents. School size played no apparent role in the respondents' rating of the effectiveness of the policy.

Size of District and School - Existence of Policy and Training

Existence of Policy

Respondents from the large school districts were more likely than expected to report having a sexual harassment policy in place at their school. Respondents from the small and mid-size school districts were less likely than expected to have a policy. Likewise, the large school respondents were more likely than expected to have a sexual harassment policy. Existence of a policy was reported as less likely than expected from the small and mid-size school respondents.

Existence of Training

The respondents from the small and mid-size districts were less likely than expected to have a sexual harassment awareness and prevention training component in operation at their school. The large district respondents were more likely than expected to provide training.

Following the same pattern, the small and mid-size school respondents were less likely than expected to report the existence of training, while the large school respondents were more likely than expected to have the training at their school.

Comparison Data- 1998 Pilot Study and 1999 Study

Data collected from 249 Oklahoma superintendents in the spring of 1998 complemented the current study data regarding sexual harassment policies and training in state public schools. Eighty-six percent of the superintendents reported the existence of a policy as compared to 89% of the 1999 middle school educators. The 1998 superintendents did indicate, however, that the policy was dispersed at much higher levels, especially to faculty and parents, than the 1999 middle school study respondents. Percentages of respondents reporting the existence of a sexual harassment training component from the superintendents (41%) was similar to the current study respondents (45%). In addition, reports of the specific groups who received the training was surprisingly similar.

Superintendents from the small districts rated the magnitude of the problem as significantly less than the larger district superintendents. Also of interest was the mean rating of the problem (2.04) given by the superintendents. This rating is the lowest of all four groups of educators. The principals' rating (2.53) , counselors (3.39) and teachers (4.05) all point to the conclusion that the closer in proximity to the students, the greater the perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem. It is an important finding that the educators closest to the students on a daily basis, the teachers, rated the problem of sexual harassment higher than the superintendents, principals or counselors. The educators with the greatest distance from the students,

the superintendents, rated the problem the lowest mean score.

Educators' Perspectives

The qualitative information provided in the surveys provided insight into the views and passions of the respondent educators. The principals' comments were mostly matter of fact, informational and rather pragmatic. One principal commented:

> Talk is all I have had to deal with. Rumors or talking about someone. Student to student- we do not tolerate it and tell the students if it happens again they will be suspended from school.

The counselors, with the greatest numbers of narratives, spoke with greater detail and had longer expositions. One counselor stated:

> My 16 year old daughter experiences sexual harassment almost daily at our high school. Some of it from male faculty members, as well as peers. She is afraid to report the male teachers for fear of repercussions (status, grades, etc.) Nothing is usually done about it when it is reported. These are my co-workers!

It was the teachers, however, that painted a picture with their words of students' lack of respect for each other. One teacher reported:

> We are seeing more problems. This year it has been more about males calling each other 'gay.' Some problems were not just jokes. Sexual harassment was The principal is great at making sure it is enforced.

Another teacher has the following concern:

> Most issues that are a problem in our district are covered up- like the very high unwed student birthrate and drugs- if there is no publicity about it, then it doesn't exist is the mentality that goes along with it.

The teachers observed student interactions with each other, aggressive verbal exchanges and inappropriate physical contact. It was the teachers who wrote about hurtful and damaging student-to-student behaviors that they wished to prevent.

It is important to note that the group of educators with the lowest mean rating of perception of the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem, the principals, are most often the providers of the awareness and prevention training. This has tremendous implications for the focus, quality and intensity of the sexual harassment training. The importance placed on the training component surely reflects the view of the presenter.

Meaning of the Findings

Policy and Training

In at least a superficial way, 89% of the respondent Oklahoma middle school educators reported that their school had some sort of sexual harassment policy. What is distressing, however, is that only 45% of the respondents report any training taking place at their school. And a shocking 76% of the educators state that the *students* receive no training. In reality, that means that the majority of the schools could have as little as one sentence in the district policy book, which could have no meaning or relevance to the stakeholders of that school, and that three out of four students receive no in service sessions about that policy. That means that three out of four students

receive no training on how to prevent sexual harassment or what to do if they are a victim of such harassment.

This is disappointing and alarming for the young adolescents of Oklahoma. Clear direction is provided by the U.S. constitution, several federal laws to include Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the 1972 Educational amendments, as well as from important Supreme Court rulings, that all schools are to have a sexual harassment policy and provide training. Many school officials are leaving their students unprotected and themselves liable.

Rural Communities

In addition, Oklahoma students are greatly impacted by the rural nature of our state. Numerous pockets of sparse populations, separated by many miles, operate small schools and small school districts. These schools are less likely to provide sexual harassment policies and training, and thus do not provide protection for their young peopie. Surveys show that sexual harassment is not less likely in these settings, just the perception of the problem by the adults in charge. That leaves the students in jeopardy. The implications for other rural states in clear.

Proximity to Students- Perception of the Problem

Finally, of great interest is the finding that the teachers rate the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem as significantly higher than the principals and even the counselors. The teachers see the every day interaction of the students. They observe students in the halls and see their interchanges in the classroom. The teachers see daily behaviors that are not reported to the counselors or administrators for possible disciplinary action. They see the constant barrage of disrespectful behaviors that have come to be accepted or at the very least tolerated. Obviously, the only most important perspective on the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem would be that of the students themselves. There is no reason to expect the Oklahoma middle school students experience harassment at a lesser rate than students across the nation.

Conclusions

Student-to-student sexual harassment is a daily occurrence in almost every school in the United States (AAUW, 1993; Shakeshaft et al, 1997; Turner, 1995). Young people are regularly subjected to verbal and physical sexual harassment at the hands of their peers. Regional, state and national surveys demonstrate that peer sexual harassment is happening at an alarming rate. According to the definitive national survey commissioned by the American Association of University Women Educational

Foundation, 81% of students in grades 8 - 11 have experienced some form of sexual harassment in school (AAUW, 1993). Peer sexual harassment greatly affects the learning ability and sense of well being of these young people (Till, 1980). Victims of harassment suffer educationally, emotionally and behaviorally.

The first step in sexual harassment prevention at school is the development of a policy. Eighty-nine percent of Oklahoma's middle school principals, counselors and teachers in this study report their school does indeed have a sexual harassment policy in place. These encouraging data also indicated that at the rate of faculty (38%), students (64%), and parents (12%) have the policy printed in their handbook. Only 73% of the respondents report that the policy is printed in their school district handbook. All stakeholders in the school setting should be familiar with and receive that policy.

The next important step in prevention is training. Again, all stakeholders in the school setting should be trained in sexual harassment awareness and prevention. Surprisingly, only 24% of the respondents indicated that the students are trained. This is the most critical piece to any successful program, and 76% of the students were not receiving any training. Respondents' rates of training for other groups: teachers (36%), administrators (35%), staff (16%), parents (2%) and community members (2%) demonstrate that Oklahoma's middle schools have tremendous strides to make in training all parties involved with the school's successful prevention of harassment.

The Oklahoma State Department of Education, Oklahoma School Board

Association, Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals and other such education organizations must develop strategies to reach the rural school districts of Oklahoma. The educators from small schools and small school districts are less likely to perceive sexual harassment as a large problem, even though national, state and regional scientific studies have documented the pervasiveness of the problem. Educators from small schools and small school districts are also less likely to have a sexual harassment policy and/or awareness and prevention training in place. The challenge of reaching rural school settings with this important information is daunting, but important. To protect the students from such damaging behaviors and to protect their schools from liability, all schools must have a policy and training component.

School policy makers are usually administrators, in conjunction with school board members. Unfortunately, the administrators may not be fully aware of the sexual harassment problem and its impact on the educational environment. Those educators who interact with the students every day, know their strengths and weaknesses, are aware of the social interaction and potentially harmful disrespect shown to others, are the classroom teachers. The teachers are more aware of the damage caused by sexual harassment. They are more aware of the daily occurrence of such behaviors. They are deeply concerned about their students' welfare. The teachers rate the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem as higher than the counselors and principals of this study and the superintendents of the pilot study (Dzialo, 1998a, 1998b).

Contributions of the Findings and Conclusions to Literature on Sexual Harassment in the Educational Setting

1. This study provides important data regarding the existence of sexual harassment policies and training in the middle schools of the state of Oklahoma. Little or no data were previously available.
2. This study provides data on small school districts and schools. Oklahoma, a relatively sparsely populated state, has 547 school districts, an extremely large number. Data demonstrate that the small school districts and small schools have a lower perception of the magnitude of the problem, are less likely to have a sexual harassment policy and are less likely to provide sexual harassment awareness and prevention training. The implications of this finding are far reaching and applicable to other states with rural populations.
3. This study reports that the educators closest in proximity to the students, the classroom teachers, have a higher rating of perception of the magnitude of the problem than those educators who do not interact daily with the students.

Recommendations for Further Study

1. This survey of Oklahoma middle school educators could be followed up with a

qualitative component. Students, teachers, counselors, principals and superintendents from districts in each of the three size categories could be interviewed. This would provide a richness of information not available through a survey instrument.

2. This survey could be administered to a randomly selected group of students across the state of Oklahoma. It would measure Oklahoma students' responses to the existence of policies and training, as well as their perception of the problem. This data could then be compared to the data from the middle school educators.

3. This study could be replicated with a more in-depth survey instrument given to a smaller representative sample of educators, as well as students.

4. This study could be replicated with high school principals, counselors, teachers and perhaps even students. This data would be informative in examining its variance with the middle school respondents.

5. A study focusing on the evaluation of sexual harassment prevention strategies would be extremely helpful in combating this problem.

6. A policy study focusing on the variety, quality and comprehensiveness of sexual harassment policies in existence in Oklahoma would greatly assist those needing guidance and direction.

7. A qualitative perspective-seeking study focusing on the consequences of peer sexual harassment on young people would be an important study.

8. A study that looks at the quality of sexual harassment awareness and prevention training in Oklahoma schools would be helpful and informative.

Summary

Prior to this study, little was known about the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment awareness and prevention training in Oklahoma's schools. Some of the data from this study is encouraging. Over 89% of the Oklahoma middle school educator respondents indicate that their school has a policy. While this is a positive sign, all stakeholders should receive a copy of that policy and currently that dispersement ranges from 64% of the students to 12% of the parents. Unfortunately, only 45% of the respondents report the existence of sexual harassment prevention training. Again, all stakeholders should be trained, but it is especially important to train all of the students. Only 24% of the respondents' schools train the young people. One of the biggest mistakes that a school can make is neglect to make any serious effort to educate students about the causes and consequences of sexual harassment. The vast majority of sexual harassment in schools is student-to-student. The student's knowledge about and attitude toward sexual harassment is the most critical factor in determining if the school has a hostile environment.

Oklahoma is a largely rural state, with many small school districts scattered in remote areas. These small school districts and schools are less likely than expected to have a policy and training. The educators from these small school districts and schools are also less likely to rate the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem as high. Our country's young people have documented its prevalence in national, state

and regional scientific surveys. Over 81% of students between grades eight and eleven self-report their victimization of sexual harassment (AAUW,1993). One can only surmise that Oklahoma's young people have similar experiences.

As researchers examine the issue of sexual harassment, it is vital that we listen to the students and the educators closest to them, the teachers. The classrooms and halls are the most likely place for peer sexual harassment to occur (AAUW, 1993; Stratton & Backes, 1997). Superintendents, principals and counselors do not have daily contact with the students and may not be as aware of the prevalence of the peer sexual harassment. Unfortunately, these educators are usually the ones most involved in initiation and implementation of school policies.

The problem of sexual harassment in schools continues to exist. Moreover, with increased public awareness and publicity of the Supreme Court's ruling in the *Davis* case, the number of sexual harassment cases will probably increase in the next few years. School districts and school administrators should be aware of what sexual harassment is and actions that can be taken to prevent or reduce its harmful effects. Two Missouri researchers put together a list of recommendations that would be clear and easy to follow:

1. Begin with a clearly and concisely stated policy.
2. Allow students and parents to participate in developing the policy.
3. Make sure students, parents, faculty and staff understand the policy.
4. Make sure the policy recognizes that sexual harassment takes many forms and can happen in many places.
5. Post the policy in several appropriate places in the building.
6. Provide appropriate in service seminars for faculty and staff.
7. Using caution, investigate every complaint.

8. Outline a clear process for reporting.
9. Document your actions regarding the complaint.
10. Follow up with the complainant and document the follow-up action.
11. Never discourage a student complaint.
12. Remember, all complaints should be investigated. (Bachus & Wright, 1996)

In summary, there is much to be done in Oklahoma in the area of training and educating our students, teachers, staff, parents and community members about the negative impact sexual harassment has on the educational environment. Educators may despair of coping with the results of social problems far beyond their control. They may experience frustration of being unable to meet the tremendous needs of the students touched daily in the classroom. Yet, every day it is the educators who are in a position to make a difference for a young person entrusted to their care. It is the task of these educators to foster relationships where each individual is valued and respected. The task at hand is to provide an educational atmosphere of safety and encouragement. Introducing adolescents to the importance of caring and respectful relationships is a noble goal. This study, through data collected from Oklahoma middle school principals, counselors and teachers, provides useful information toward beginning that significant task.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Principals

March 1, 1999

Dear Middle Level Principal:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

All information from this project will be kept confidential. The survey instrument is numbered only to provide information on which principals will be sent a second request to respond to the survey. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Project publications will not allow identification of individual educators or their schools.

Please complete the survey and return it and the informed consent form in the addressed, stamped envelope today. **Please return the consent form and the survey instrument even if you only answer the second question NO or if the majority of your responses are NO.** I sincerely appreciate your response, as well as your efforts on behalf of the young people of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

Linda Dzialo
Doctoral student, University of Oklahoma

With questions regarding this project or for results of the project contact Linda Dzialo, 1-580-357-6900 ex. 242. Questions regarding the rights of participants should be directed to the OU Office of Research Administration at 1-405-325-4757.

APPENDIX B

Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Counselors

March 1, 1999

Dear Middle Level Counselor:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

All information from this project will be kept confidential. The survey instrument is numbered only to provide information on which counselors will be sent a second request to respond to the survey. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Project publications will not allow identification of individual educators or their schools.

Please complete the survey and return it in the addressed, stamped envelope today. **Please return the consent form and the survey instrument even if you only answer the second question NO or if the majority of your responses are NO.** I sincerely appreciate your response, as well as your efforts on behalf of the young people of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

Linda Dzialo
Doctoral student, University of Oklahoma

With questions regarding this project or for results of the project contact Linda Dzialo, 1-580-357-6900 ex. 242. Questions regarding the rights of participants should be directed to the OU Office of Research Administration at 1-405-325-4757.

APPENDIX C

Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Teachers

March 1, 1999

Dear Middle Level Teacher:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

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APPENDIX D

*SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY SURVEY

1. **District's** total student population _____ **School's** total student population ____

   Grades served in your school 4 5 6 7 8 9 Others _____
   (Circle all that apply)

2. Does your school have a sexual harassment policy? Yes No Don't Know
   (If yes, please circle those categories in question 3 that apply)

3. Policy printed in student handbook parent handbook faculty handbook
   district policy book Other_____

4. Does your school conduct training on sexual harassment? Yes No Don't Know
   (If yes, please circle those categories in questions 5 that apply)

5. Sexual harassment training is provided for-
   Administrators Students Teachers Support Staff
   Parents Community Other _____

6. If training is provided for any/all of the groups listed above, who provides the training?
   (Circle all that apply)

   Superintendent Principal School Attorney Central Office
   Consultant Video Counselor Other_____

7. Based upon your knowledge, to what degree is sexual harassment a problem in your school?
   (Circle the appropriate number)

   NONE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 LARGE

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of your school's sexual harassment policy?

   INEFFECTIVE 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 EFFECTIVE

9. Please make any additional comments regarding the policy, training sessions or magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment at your school. *(Please feel free to continue on the back.)*

** Unwanted and unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that interferes with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity (McGrath, 1993). Examples of student-to-student sexual harassment include inappropriate visual, verbal and/or physical conduct ranging from spreading sexual rumors or staring at body parts, to physically assaulting another person.*

APPENDIX E

Follow-Up Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Principals

March 17, 1999

Dear Middle Level Principal:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

All information from this project will be kept confidential. The survey instrument is numbered only to provide information on which principals will be sent a second request to respond to the survey. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Project publications will not allow identification of individual educators or their schools.

Please complete the survey and return it and the informed consent form in the addressed, stamped envelope today. **Please return the consent form and the survey instrument even if you only answer the second question NO or if the majority of your responses are NO.** I sincerely appreciate your response, as well as your efforts on behalf of the young people of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

Linda Dzialo
Doctoral student, University of Oklahoma

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APPENDIX F

Follow-Up Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Counselors

March 17, 1999

Dear Middle Level Counselor:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

All information from this project will be kept confidential. The survey instrument is numbered only to provide information on which counselors will be sent a second request to respond to the survey. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Project publications will not allow identification of individual educators or their schools.

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Sincerely,

Linda Dzialo
Doctoral student, University of Oklahoma

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APPENDIX G

Follow-Up Letter to Oklahoma Middle School Teachers

March 17, 1999

Dear Middle Level Teacher:

I am conducting a survey to determine the status of sexual harassment policies and sexual harassment prevention activities in middle level schools in Oklahoma. This information will be used as background data for a study of the consequences of peer sexual harassment on public school students.

As an Oklahoma teacher and principal for twenty-five years, I know how hectic your schedule can be this time of year. **This survey should take no more than five minutes**, and will hopefully assist educators in providing a safe and nurturing environment for all our students.

All information from this project will be kept confidential. The survey instrument is numbered only to provide information on which teachers will be sent a second request to respond to the survey. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet and will be destroyed when no longer needed. Project publications will not allow identification of individual educators or their schools.

Please complete the survey and return it in the addressed, stamped envelope today. **Please return the consent form and the survey instrument even if you only answer the second question NO or if the majority of your responses are NO.** I sincerely appreciate your response, as well as your efforts on behalf of the young people of Oklahoma.

Sincerely,

Linda Dzialo
Doctoral student, University of Oklahoma

With questions regarding this project or for results of the project contact Linda Dzialo, 1-580-357-6900 ex. 242. Questions regarding the rights of participants should be directed to the OU Office of Research Administration at 1-405-325-4757.

APPENDIX H

Informed Consent Form

For a research study conducted under the auspices of The University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus.

The research study is entitled Survey of Oklahoma Middle Level School Personnel Regarding Sexual Harassment Policies and Training. It is conducted by Linda Giles Dzialo, principal investigator. Questions should be addressed to Mrs. Dzialo at 1-580-357-6900.

Researchers have documented the magnitude of the problem of sexual harassment for school children. We know very little, however, about how this problem is being addressed by the schools of Oklahoma. This study, through a survey, will attempt to determine the extent to which each of Oklahoma's middle level schools are seeking to prevent sexual harassment. This survey will provide information about the existence of sexual harassment policies, to whom they are dispersed and which groups in the school community are trained about sexual harassment. It will provide the perspective of the middle school principal, counselor and teachers regarding the magnitude of the sexual harassment problem and the effectiveness of any existing policy.

All information from this project will be kept confidential within limits of the law. A pseudonym will be given to any person quoted in a presentation, whether presented orally or in writing. All data will be protected from non-project personnel through storage in a locked cabinet. All identifiable data will be destroyed when no longer needed, and project publications will not allow identification of individual subjects or school districts.

Students, staff and faculty of Oklahoma's schools will potentially benefit from this research project as the purpose is to determine if sexual harassment policies are in place in Oklahoma middle level schools and if students, teachers, principals, and parents are receiving information about sexual harassment. This project, as well as future studies by this researcher on sexual harassment prevention, can only increase the safety and positive climate of our schools. Since the identify of the participating individual and his/her school will be protected, there appear to be no risks to the respondents.

I agree to take part in this project. I know that my participation is strictly voluntary.

_____ _____

Signature Date

APPENDIX I

Oklahoma Middle School Principals' comments regarding Sexual Harassment

1. We are lucky to live and work in an area where parents are involved to a large degree with their children and their education. Our community is very supportive of our harassment policy. We meet with our students and explain the policy, give examples and make sure everyone understands the policy and why it is in effect. In all middle schools, the children are becoming aware of their sexuality and sometimes behave in inappropriate ways. We try to educate them in this area.

2. New school year orientation, principals' meeting with staff, forms and policy are covered- procedure for filing a complaint. Briefing of state law on sexual harassment.

3. I have attached a copy of the student handbook section on sexual harassment.

4. Should be more on-going training each year.

5. Our school hasn't had very many reported incidents of sexual harassment. The reports we have had are dealt with swiftly with serious consequences if the harassment continues. So far, this has kept the problem under control.

6. The administration at my school leads the effort to discourage all harassment and provide positive emphasis on individual differences. This effort is evident in all conferences with students, faculty, parents and other called meetings.

7. The policy has helped us become more aware of our rights.

8. This is a very common problem in our society. Ongoing education and severe punishment for violators needs to be consistent throughout all school systems.

9. No formal training. We talk to students in lunchroom and teachers in faculty meetings.

10. Middle schoolers struggle with appropriate sexual behavior. It is particularly significant that we provide both modeling and instruction to prevent harassment!

11. Talk is all that I have had to deal with. Rumors or talking about someone. Student to student- We do not tolerate it and tell the students if it happens again they will be suspended from school.

12. Children's attitude, etc. often reflects parents' attitude.

13. Most of the sexual harassment at this grade level is language or verbal harassment.

14. Schools districts nationwide should have mandatory sexual harassment training for students since the bulk of cases are reported on this level.

APPENDIX J

Oklahoma Middle School Counselors' comments regarding Sexual Harassment

1. If sexual harassment is reported, the principal treats the manner as "harassment" and this is in our handbook. The punishment stated in the handbook for "harassment" is 3 - 10 demerits in which the student will receive suspension.

2. Lack of respect is a big problem throughout our school.

3. I believe some situations are ignored. Someday, we may have a problem with faculty and students.

4. More awareness is necessary.

5. Rules and policies act as deterrents. If a student is referred for sexual harassment, the principal reviews the policy- does a lot of processing with the student, etc. If this is clearly sexual harassment issue, the procedures are followed exactly as policy is written.

6. If a student reports an incident, the staff investigates and determines if it truly is a harassment issue. Policy is strictly enforced at that point. Overt offenses have administrative consequences. Cases investigated and found not to be harassment cases are referred to counselor for intervention.

7. The only kind of harassment that is a problem is student to student, not faculty to student.

8. May be a problem here, but not to my knowledge.

9. This is my first year as a counselor and I see a need for more training on this topic. I have shown two videos and we had a speaker from the YMCA who gave a presentation to our students.

10. I retrieved some sexual harassment literature from the state department at my principal's request. The principal wanted to do some training with our students but nothing ever came of it.

11. All staff need to be aware of practical procedures. Students need to learn what "sexual harassment" is and the consequences of not abiding by policies.

12. The above indicates student to student- not faculty to student. There is none known to me.

13. I deal with some kind of sexual harassment each week.

14. We seldom have to deal with overt sexual harassment. Most of our cases involve excessive teasing or horsing around that gets out of hand that students didn't realize was a form of harassment. What students understand is- Anything they do (verbally or physically) that makes another student feel uncomfortable (embarrassed, ashamed, violated) is harassment.

15. Most sexual harassment occurs among students.

16. I teach a guidance class. In that class we briefly touch on the subject of sexual harassment. Any isolated cases that occur are handled on an individual basis.

17. Needs to be addressed.

18. All teachers are given materials to talk to their students about sexual harassment in their first hour class the first week of school.

19. Policy will be more detailed in '99-'00 handbooks.

20. Many middle school students do not understand the seriousness of their behavior. Once they understand, the behavior usually improves. Our assistant principal does a great job with this issue.

21. Our policy is just that students can be punished for sexual harassment. I don't know of a district policy.

22. Frequent among 7th grade students (minor issue)- dealt with by counselors individually or in groups.

23. We plan to implement during the 99-2000 school year a comprehensive program to help our students understand the unique worth of every individual. This will include sexual harassment.

24. Girls encourage sexual behaviors until the perpetrator is a boy they don't like or until it escalates to contact.

25. Once students are made aware of our policy and the consequences, we usually find that it deters the problem.

26. Action currently re-active rather than pro-active.

27. This is a middle school. We have growing bodies with growing hormones. Most of our students are very sexually aware, but we do not have many actual harassment complaints.

28. If the child brings it to our attention immediate action is taken.

29. Policy is clear, consequences fairly given. The problem when it occurs is addressed seriously and those concerned understand we have no tolerance.

30. Girls and boys are coming in with terrible amounts of verbal abuse as well as touching inappropriately.

31. I feel we have a good policy and sexual harassment has not been a real big problem here.

32. As adults, most of us know right and wrong. Students have to be reminded.

33. Has not been a huge issue or at least has not been public knowledge if it has been a problem. I would say rumors and verbal harassment are most common.

34. Middle school principal deals individually with students accused of any form of sexual harassment. It is not tolerated. Rarely has to be dealt with.

35. Students do respond when they become aware of what sexual harassment is. I see a reduction in referrals of this nature after classroom guidance regarding respect of others rights and sexual harassment. Enclosed is a copy of our policy.

36. My 16 year old daughter experiences sexual harassment almost daily at our high school. Some of it from male faculty members, as well as peers. She is afraid to report the male teachers for fear of repercussions (status, grades, etc.) Nothing is usually done about it when it is reported. These are my co-workers!

37. It's not a large problem in our school. Situations that have occurred that could be considered sexual harassment have ben dealt with swiftly and fairly.

38. Students can be suspended from school for sexual harassment and receive counseling services.

39. I've not encountered any harassment of any kind at my school, either as an educator or that a student has mentioned to me.

40. I believe that more students experience sexual harassment than report it. I am not aware that it is a problem among our adults, but I believe that it is among the students.

41. This has not been a problem in our school until this year. We have had two pretty serious incidents. Consequently we have upped our awareness and materials and counseling techniques.

42. In most instances, the sexual harassment is the result of over zealous flirtation. However, when dealing with the students, it is handled as a serious offense. Students are made aware of the school's policy on the issue as well as public law. They quickly realize that this behavior will not be tolerated.

43. Policy has not been formally tested; have not had to deal with formal complaint of this nature.

44. Additional training is needed for all personnel.

45. This district policy seems to be adequate. Training sessions meet the requirement for having training but the "message" sent out does not necessarily sway entrenched behavior. Most will not change behavior until the possibility of a negative consequences becomes evident (or at least it seems that way to me). The problems at school with students have an additional factor in the mix- maturation. Most middle school students have not yet matured- moral development- to a point or window where what is being taught is grasped. That does not mean that maturation development will not come, but most will not yet grasp the concepts. The "whole" should be taught so that those who are ready and willing to receive, can do so. Others will catch up later on and the background will help in the development. There will be those who seem to never catch on and there's the focal problem.

    Additionally, though it's difficult, the accused should be able to confront the accuser, with mediation if necessary. Too many times the accuser does a "hit and run" where s/he makes an accusation to a higher authority and vests that authority the permission to confront the accused on her/his behalf, leaving the accuser out of the direct intervention process. This causes a concern for possible falsification of the event just to get the accused in trouble or begin character assassination proceedings. This should not be allowed and by having a mediator who is in control, as much as possible, of his/her prejudices/biases to handle such cases, injustice may be prevented.

46. It is usually name calling. After investigating each offense, the student is read the section out of our code book and the appropriate measures are taken by the principal and counselor jointly.

47. We need to periodically train our staff in responding to sexual harassment situations.

APPENDIX K

Oklahoma Middle School Teachers' comments regarding Sexual Harassment

1. Not really a problem in rural setting.

2. Effectiveness of policy is related to enforcement of administrators.

3. Our district doesn't provide sexual harassment training. Our handbook for students defines sexual harassment and says suspension of indeterminate amount of time (3 days-semester and next semester) is punishment. The only sexual harassment training I have attended was sponsored by OEA- Hurting Not Flirting- and local workshop sponsored by OEA.

4. Most issues that are a problem in our district are covered up- like the very high unwed student birthrate and drugs- if there is no publicity about it, then it doesn't exist is the mentality that goes along with it.

5. We are seeing more problems. This year it has been more about males calling each other "gay." Some problems were not just jokes. Sexual harassment was discussed at our first faculty meeting. The principal is great at making sure it is enforced.

6. I do not see a problem among the staff or staff to students. I have witnessed it student to student occasionally in the hall. I witness it more at the high school where I teach one class.

7. There is a great deal of student touching in the hallways. Both boys and girls are aggressive to each other. The students don't seem to consider it harassment and the touching is so rampant, it is impossible to control it.

8. Problem is ignored and overlooked, even laughed about. A problem we see quite often is the student-student remarks calling another student "gay." This often causes long term problems and rumors.

9. Students are advised of the policy in class meetings at the beginning of the school year. Teachers have been advised about the policy in staff development meetings in August. At various times in recent years instruction has taken place in the classroom.

10. We'll probably have a training session next year.

11. This is addressed, and to my knowledge, this is not a problem in the district.

12. Not aware of any suits among the adult population. Administrators are very supportive of teachers when a student has been referred and the student is either placed in our school's in-house suspension or sent home. We have few problems here.

13. Sexual harassment is not seen by administrators as being a significant problem relative to the other problems.

14. There is no training for sexual harassment.

15. Children need to be informed- They don't know what is right or wrong and therefore don't know how to say STOP.

16. A policy is not really necessary in our district at this time.

17. We take a hard line on this. Therefore there aren't too many incidents.

18. Believe it or not, lots of girls are propositioning boys.

19. We have no policy or training.

20. The sexual harassment is between students, both girls and boys. There is none between teacher-teacher or teacher-student that I know of.

21. A sexual harassment policy was adopted this year after a student-to-student verbal confrontation occurred.

22. We need education for staff and students.

23. To this date sexual harassment issues have been dealt with individually.