

# HWS survey shows bullying's not that prevalent

By DAVID TAUBE

dtaub@fltimes.com

GENEVA — The prevalence of alcohol consumption by college students and bullying by grade school students have one thing in common — peers think the behavior happens much more often than it actually does, research shows.

Results of an October bullying survey conducted by Hobart and William Smith Colleges professors H. Wesley Perkins and David W. Craig at the Geneva Middle School will begin to hit district classrooms next week.

The pair previously conducted the survey at five New Jersey schools.

The Web-based survey was administered to all Geneva Middle School students on Oct. 5 to 9 through social studies classes. The survey had 437 of 520 students participate.

While most students did not seem to suffer from bullying behavior here in Geneva — such as being the victim of pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking, hair pulling or tripping — they seemed to think others were.

From the beginning of September to October, 242 students said this kind of behavior did not happen to them, while only 60 thought this did not happen to others — suggesting that their peers were indeed victims of bullying.

During that same time period, 84 students said this behavior happened to them once; 55 said “two-to-three times,” and 34 said “four or more times.”

For their peers, 84 students said this happened once, 127 said “two to three times,” and 141 said “four or more times.”

“[The] perception is worse than the reality,” Middle School Principal Carmine Calabria said.

Colleges students will meet with Middle School student organizations to determine how to spread the information across the school.

Those students, under the guidance of HWS education professor Charles Temple, will meet Nov. 12 and will present the findings on Nov. 17 in classrooms. A school assembly on the survey results will be held in

December.

“The more we get the information in the hands of the kids, the more profound the impact,” Calabria said in a statement.

Other survey results indicate the district is heading in the direction it wants to in terms of anti-bullying:

► Ninety-two percent of Geneva Middle School students believe students should not shove, kick, hit, trip, or pull hair of another student.

► Most Geneva Middle School students — three out of four — think that students should tell a teacher or counselor if they or someone else is being bullied at school.

► Most Geneva Middle School students (nine out of 10) agree that “students should always try to be friendly with students who are different from themselves.”

“Asked what other people would say, they indicated they thought most other people were bullied,” Temple said. “[But] a great majority of the students, more than 90 percent, found it a very friendly place.”

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