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UNIVERSITY

March 25, 2011

Mary Sullivan, Director
Community Information and Education Division
Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Martha Coakley
One Ashburton Place
Boston MA 02108

Dear Ms. Sullivan,

We recently became aware of testimony given to the Attorney General by Nan Stein, Wellesley Centers for Women, which disparages the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) and refers to research on existing bullying prevention programming as "junk science." Ms. Stein's testimony distorts the reality of the demonstrated success of the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. This testimony is not helpful to Massachusetts school administrators, state government decision makers, and educators who are charged with implementing a sound research based bullying prevention program in their schools.

In her testimony, Dr. Stein cites an article by researchers Ttofi & Farrington (2009) to support her statement that "only about five percent of existing intervention, prevention, and remediation programs, in general has demonstrated any value/worth of effectiveness," and she encourages the state DOE to "compile a list that is not comprised of junk science." Ttofi and Farrington have, in fact, conducted the most complete and rigorous study to date on bullying prevention programs (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009; Ttofi, Farrington, & Baldry, 2008) and concluded that comprehensive school programs to reduce bullying can be quite successful, but that there are great variations in their effects. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program is the only bullying prevention program in their meta-analysis that has been replicated a number of times with positive results; all the other program evaluations are based on first-time, demonstration projects (where possible future replications are much more uncertain). Authors of the study concluded that programs "inspired by the work of Dan Olweus worked best" (Ttofi et al., 2008, p. 8) and that future efforts should be "grounded in the successful Olweus programme" (p. 8).

As you likely are aware, US organizations and agencies have also undertaken evaluations and/or reviews of bullying prevention programs. The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program has been recognized by quite a few, including:

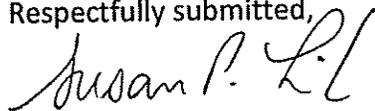


- The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, University of Colorado. The OBPP is one of 11 approved Blueprint Programs and the only one focusing on bullying prevention; a total of more than 600 programs have been assessed.
- U.S. Department of Education. The OBPP is listed as a Level 2 Program, which is “scientifically demonstrated to prevent delinquency or reduce/enhance risk/protection for delinquency and other child and youth problems using either an experimental or quasi-experimental research design, with a comparison group, and the evidence suggests program effectiveness.”
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. The OBPP is listed as an Effective Program.

The attached article, published in the *Journal of School Violence* this year, summarizes the OBPP and relevant evaluation research. Large-scale evaluations of the OBPP are currently being conducted in Pennsylvania (Masiello et al., 2009) and Virginia (Moffett, 2010), and researchers are finding very positive results in each.¹

Please feel free to contact us should you need any further information. Our program website can be found at www.olweus.org.

Respectfully submitted,



Susan P. Limber, PhD, MLS

¹ All references cited in this letter may be found in the attached article, with one exception: Moffett, C. (November, 2010). *OBPP Implementation Fidelity Pays Dividends In Reduced Bullying: Lessons Learned From A Large Scale Olweus Bullying Prevention Project In Virginia*. Paper presented at the 7th Annual Conference of the International Bullying Prevention Association. Seattle, WA.