

#### **4. Study on Desirable Guidance on the Prevention of Bullying and Violence**

Leader: Fumio Sakka (Director, Guidance and Counseling Research Center)

##### **(1) Method and purpose of the study**

We asked three school districts (with one lower secondary school and two elementary schools each, or nine schools in total) to actually plan and conduct guidance for preventing bullying and violence in advance, and concurrently conducted a survey by questionnaire and door-to-door surveys on the process and results thereof. Through such means, we intended to empirically clarify effective guidance methods, not only judging whether respective methods are effective or not, but also showing how difficult it is to continue each of them throughout the year. Furthermore, we conducted the same survey by questionnaire with all elementary schools and lower secondary schools located in the two school districts, other than the pilot schools, so as to obtain reference data for making an analysis.

##### **(2) Outline of the flow of the study (basic plan)**

This study was conducted during the period of three years from FY2007 to FY2009.

First year: We conducted a survey by questionnaire of students (twice a year, in June and December). The results provided the standards for the evaluation and implementation of guidance.

Second year: Based on the preparation during the latter half of the first year, the pilot schools each carried out their original activities. We conducted the same survey of students as in the previous year to see yearly changes. At the end of the fiscal year, the pilot schools held a meeting to report and mutually examine the activities during the year.

Third year: Reflecting on the activities of the second year, the pilot schools carried out their activities anew. In order to measure the effects of the activities, we conducted the same survey of students as in the previous years to see yearly changes. At the end of the fiscal year, the pilot schools held a final meeting to complete a report.

##### **(3) Originality of and approach to the study**

The major object of this study was not to develop new preventative measures, but to figure out what is necessary for schools to surely carry out and steadily execute conventional measures that have already been proved effective to their completion.

The reason for this is as follows. Considering the nature and the current status of bullying cases, it is quite obvious that preventive measures are indispensable, but most schools only take ex-post facto measures, rarely coping with the problems proactively. Why can't they take preventive measures? And why can't they continue the efforts they started, or what is the reason

that such moves do not spread to neighboring schools? We sought to clarify the answers to these questions and present some concrete means to improve the situation. This was the source of our study's originality.

#### **(4) Recognition as the premise of the study**

Studies on bullying at school and its countermeasures have a history of over 20 years in Japan. Academic studies beyond critical essays and experience-based knowledge have been publicized, and reports on scientifically-proved practices and guidebooks have also been published widely.

The National Institute for Educational Policy Research has also continued follow-up research examining the causes and background of school bullying. For over ten years, the institute has pointed out the necessity of preventive measures, developed practical effective measures, and has supported efforts in Niigata prefecture and Fukuoka prefecture.

<Past studies by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research>

- International Forum for Student Guidance 1999: "Efforts for Bullying Prevention by the Peace Method"
- International Forum for Student Guidance 2000: "Efforts for Student Guidance Utilizing the Peer Support Technique"
- International Forum for Student Guidance 2001: "Efforts for Student Guidance Utilizing a Stress Checklist"

(The above three are published in *Creation of Schools Begins with the Cooperation of Teachers, Children, and Communities* by the Guidance and Counseling Research Center of the National Institute for Educational Policy Research (January 2003).)

- *Exchange Activities and Hands-on Activities that Foster a Foundation for Children's Social Development – Making Children Aware of the Happiness of Communicating with Others –* (National Institute for Educational Policy Research, March 2004)
- *Report of the International Symposium for Educational Reform: Preventing Undesirable Behavior in Children* (National Institute for Educational Policy Research and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, March 2006)

In spite of these efforts, however, bullying cases do not seem to decrease at all. The follow-up surveys by the National Institute for Educational Policy Research clearly show that circumstances concerning school bullying have not changed so much, and it's not a question of schools nationwide not taking various measures against bullying. Therefore, one might conclude that the lack of improvement in the situation may stem from problems in the environment surrounding schools which obstruct their efforts to take preventive measures.

We started this survey, considering that it is more important to figure out the reasons

hindering schools from acting proactively and to bring about a breakthrough, rather than to propose new preventative measures.

**(5) Our activities in FY2007**

- We conducted a pre-guidance survey by questionnaire of students for the purpose of examining the process of changes in schools at the pilot schools and cooperative schools (twice a year).
- We held committee meetings to discuss differences between schools that can take preventive measures and schools that cannot.
- We prepared questionnaires for teachers concerning their awareness of bullying and violence and conducted a survey. (From this survey, it became clear that half of the teachers are naïve about bullying and are apt to avoid facing up to the facts and try to cope with the situation based only on their past experience. Therefore, we decided to start preparing reference materials to help teachers change their awareness of bullying as a preliminary step to proceed to encourage them to take preventive measures.)
- We explained our activities in the first year to the pilot schools.

**(6) Our activities in FY2008**

- We prepared a training tool to change teachers' awareness (to make them aware of such facts as that bullying is not the problem of only a few children, and that teachers often do not notice bullying in class). After repeated trials and improvements, we completed the "School Training Tool on Bullying" (released in June 2009).
- The pilot schools each started trials. We decided upon only the outline to be shared (establishment of themes, goals, and plans based on data and the verification of the results six months later) and left concrete details of how to plan and conduct trials to each pilot school.
- We attended workshops held at each of the pilot schools, so as to collect information and provide advice.
- In order to examine the process of changes in schools, we conducted the same survey by questionnaire of students as in the previous year.
- At the end of the fiscal year, the pilot schools held a meeting to report their progress and examine the reasons why their past efforts had not been effective.
- We decided to jointly carry out activities for the next fiscal year, giving full consideration to the management cycle.

**(7) Our activities in FY2009**

- All the pilot schools conducted trials, keeping the “P.E.A.C.E. Method” (management cycle) in mind.
- We attended workshops held at each of the pilot schools, so as to collect information and provide advice.
- We prepared and provided a check sheet so that schools could verify their efforts in the cycle for themselves.
- In order to examine the process of changes in schools, we conducted the same survey by questionnaire of students as in the previous year.
- At the end of the fiscal year, the pilot schools held a meeting to report and examine their efforts and the process thereof.

We compiled the report, “How to Provide Student Guidance for Preventing Problematic Events” (released in June 2010).

#### **(8) Findings from the study**

- When taking any preventive measures against bullying and other undesirable behavior, it was proven to be effective to act while giving full consideration to the management cycle.
- We were able to prepare a booklet to explain examples of mistakes that schools are likely to make when trying to provide student guidance based on the management cycle, as well as procedures to avoid such mistakes.

#### **(9) Reports on this study (deliverables)**

“School Training Tool on Bullying” (published in *References for Supporting Student Guidance: “Understanding Bullying”*) (June 2009)

<http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/ijimetool/ijimetool.htm>

“How to Provide Student Guidance for Preventing Problematic Events” (published in *References for Supporting Student Guidance 2: “Preventing Bullying”*)

<http://www.nier.go.jp/shido/centerhp/shienschiryu2/2.htm>