
I highly recommend this book to all educators. Dealing with bullying—whether it is in the school, on the playground, at school-sponsored sporting events, or on the school bus—has become a focus at most schools.

“Bullying is evolving with a Darwinistic perseverance to thrive,” writes Shona Anderson in the introduction to No More Bystanders. “The classic schoolyard bully who takes your lunch money is now almost a welcome and easily dealt with problem. The new breeds of bully that have evolved are nearly invisible, as the anonymity of computers allows cyberbullying to be imperceptible.”

This well-written book provides insight into the bullying problem we in education face, and it also provides the reader with the resources necessary to develop a culture that no longer accepts or tolerates standing by as bullying occurs.

Each chapter features reflection points and guiding questions that permit the reader the opportunity to absorb and react to the material presented. I found this very useful because my style is to rush to a solution to a problem as it comes up. Many times this will correct a symptom to the problem but it rarely allows me to effectively address the issue. Taking the time to “reflect and absorb” what the author shared has permitted me to use this book as a guide for properly addressing bullying issues that occur in my building.

The seven action steps Shona Anderson recommends to achieve “non-bystanderism” are easily implemented but will require a commitment from the administrator and the building staff to make this approach to dealing with bullying successful.

Anderson provides resources and tools to help implement her approach, including action items, reflection points, guiding questions, and case studies. The book also includes questionnaires, a glossary, and a brief dictionary of online codes (e.g., P911 = parent alert).

I expect to refer to this excellent resource over and over again.

Reviewed by Matthew Gray, Principal, Madison Elementary School, Middletown, Ohio.

Principal ONLINE

Access the following web resource by visiting Principal magazine online: www.naesp.org/MayJun12

No More Bystanders = No More Bullies is available from the NPRC bookstore.

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The National Elementary Honor Society is a program of NASSP in cooperation with NAESP.

The first step toward improving public education is to strengthen and deepen our understanding of the diverse needs and preferences of its most important stakeholders: the parents and students it is intended to serve as well as the educators at the heart of the institution,” write Kim Smith and Julie Peterson in chapter 1 of Customized Schooling. This quote represents the essence of this book’s 223 pages of well-honed information. The book convincingly makes the case that education reform needs to revolve around customized schooling that meets the needs of students and their parents.

“In a world where such trivial services as cell phone plans and television sports packages are routinely customized to meet individual needs, it is bizarre that school districts are so often tripped up when identifying the concerns of different families, seeking ways to provide extra tutoring to particular students, or finding means to satisfy demands for particular advanced or elective instruction,” write editors Frederick Hess and Bruno Manno in the book’s introduction.

In urging an entrepreneurial approach, this book goes beyond the typical concept from the 1990s that schools should take a note from business and streamline and cross-train, explaining the service information of supply, demand, and responsive supply. That is the key in this book.

The editors succeed in convincing me that not black, not white, but the gray area is what is so crucial in school reform. Instead of seeing a child’s needs as either met or unmet by one system of education, the editors challenge us to view online, local public, and charter systems as hand-in-hand.

Let’s say a child can get her math instructional needs met online. That is one-third of a per pupil funding matrix. Now she needs some reading and writing instruction. How about the local school district for a few hours? She needs specials such as music and art, you say? Why not the local charter school. That is 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 of a full per pupil operating revenue funding equation. And so what if the product, also known as responsive supply, creates competition? The answer is “so be it.” Then we will finally be where customized schooling takes place.

Reviewed by Sonya Hemmen, Head of School, Ross Montessori School, Carbondale, Colorado.