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# from Research on a School Bullying Prevention Program



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# Steps to Success

- 1) Careful Planning
- 2) Thorough Implementation
- 3) On-going Evaluation



Any School, USA

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# Planning

- **Form a “Bullying-Prevention Committee”**
  - Include administration, colleagues, students, and community members
  - Include both advocates and potential naysayers
- **Invite school body to participate in planning:**
  - Surveys, discussion groups, student leadership
  - Provide training and on-going discussion opportunities for staff
- **Decide on attainable and measurable goals:**
  - “Reduce reports of student bullying by 20%”
  - “Increase staff efforts to police bullying”
  - “Improve school climate ratings”

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# Implementation: Olweus Model

## General requirement

Awareness and involvement by adults

## School Level

Survey to measure problem

School-wide & Parent conferences

Better supervision during recess & lunch

## Class Level

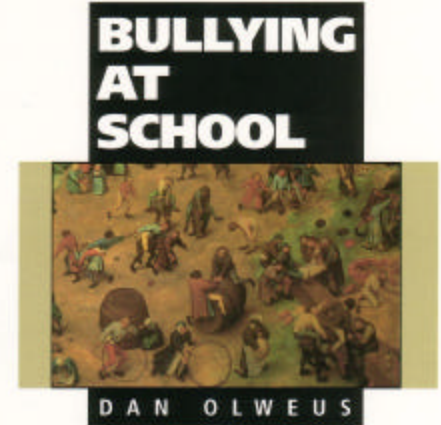
Class rules against bullying

Class meetings addressing bullying

## Individual Level

Serious talks with bullies and victims

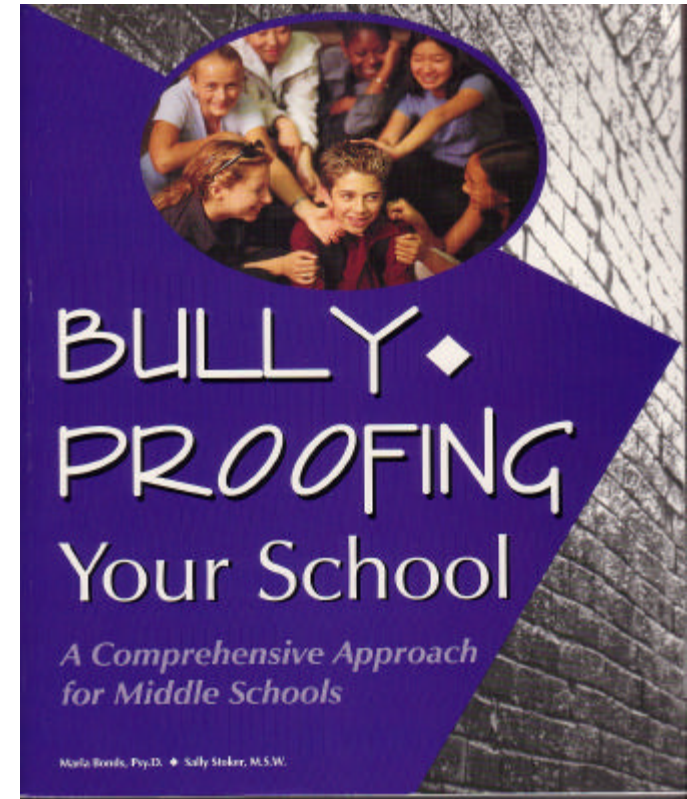
Serious talks with parents of involved students



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## Implementation: *Bully-Proofing Your School*

- Emphasizes fostering a caring learning community
- Classroom lessons in:
  - Teasing
  - Sexual harassment
  - Avoiding victimization
  - Empathy and inclusion
  - Creative problem solving
  - Positive leadership
- Addresses bystander behaviors
- Includes intervention approaches with bullies, victims, and parents



**Bonds & Stoker, 2000**

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## On-going Evaluation

- **Action research** is the deliberate effort to apply evaluation findings to program implementation and improvement
- Consists of four main steps:
  - 1) designating measurable goals for a program initiative
  - 2) using valid and reliable measurements (e.g., self-report surveys, teacher or parent surveys, observations, interviews, school records) to collect data
  - 3) applying data findings – both positive and negative – to the program methodology, and
  - 4) continuing to reapply these steps throughout the duration of the intervention

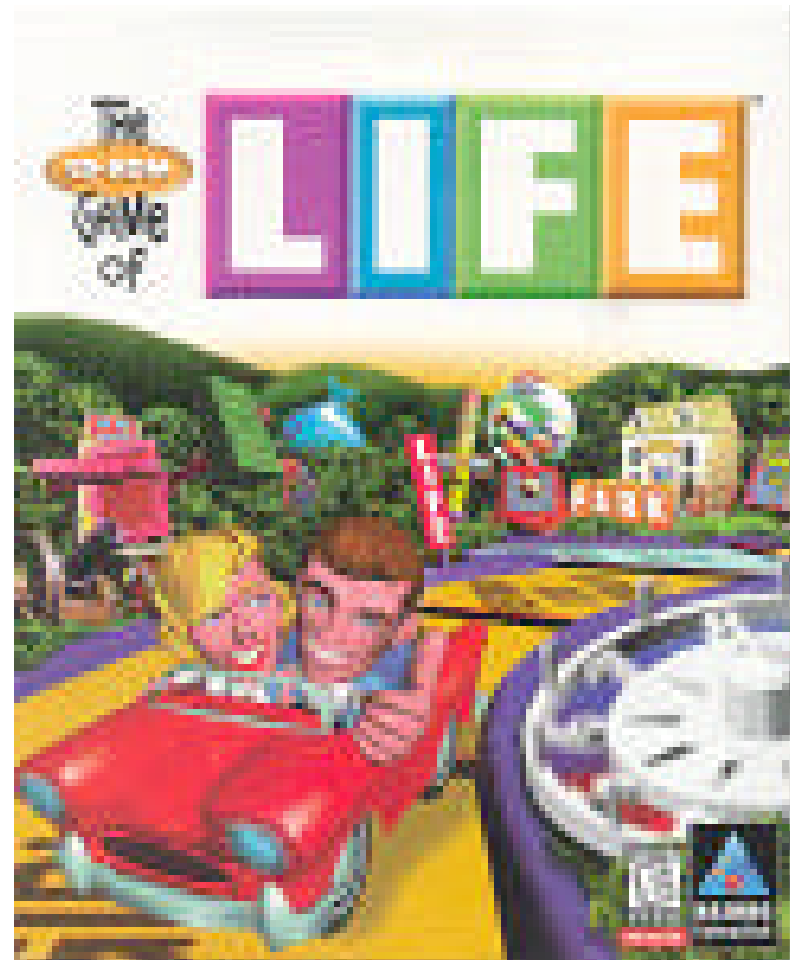
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## *Action Research Rocks!*

“Implementing a program without planning and evaluation is similar to taking a family vacation without a final destination or an accurate map.

It is bound to lead to unmet expectations, frustrating detours, and myriad other problems.”

- *CEP Evaluation Toolkit*



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## Applying Action Research

- Suburban middle school; grades 6-8; approx. 450 students
- Staff concerned about students' perception of school safety and school climate
- Initiated a school-wide anti-bullying initiative:
  - Formed a committee
  - Followed the Olweus model
  - Used *Bully-Proofing Your School in Year 2*
  - Had three anti-bullying assemblies a year
  - Increased teacher monitoring
  - Had one staff in-service each year
  - Included parents in the intervention
  - Used the *YVP Peer Relations Survey*

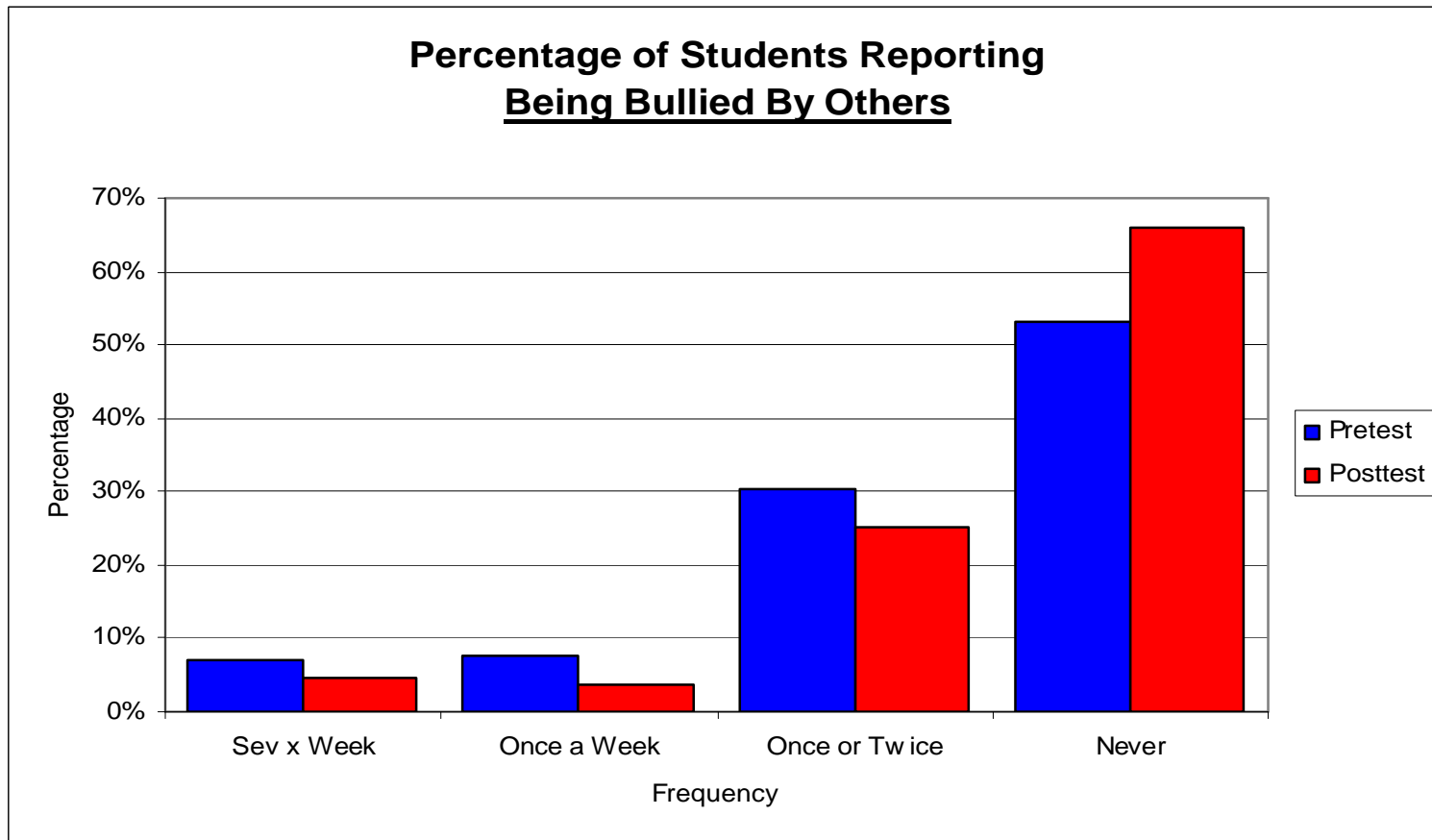
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## Peer Relations Survey

- Administered each March: 2001 (pre-test), 2002 (Year 1 post-test), 2003 (Year 2 post-test)
- 39-item, Likert scale, self-report survey administered during homeroom
- Survey constructs:
  - Bullying and bullying victimization
  - Physical, verbal, and social peer aggression
  - Attitudes toward aggression
  - Student perception of teacher support
  - Intervention attitudes
  - Validity question

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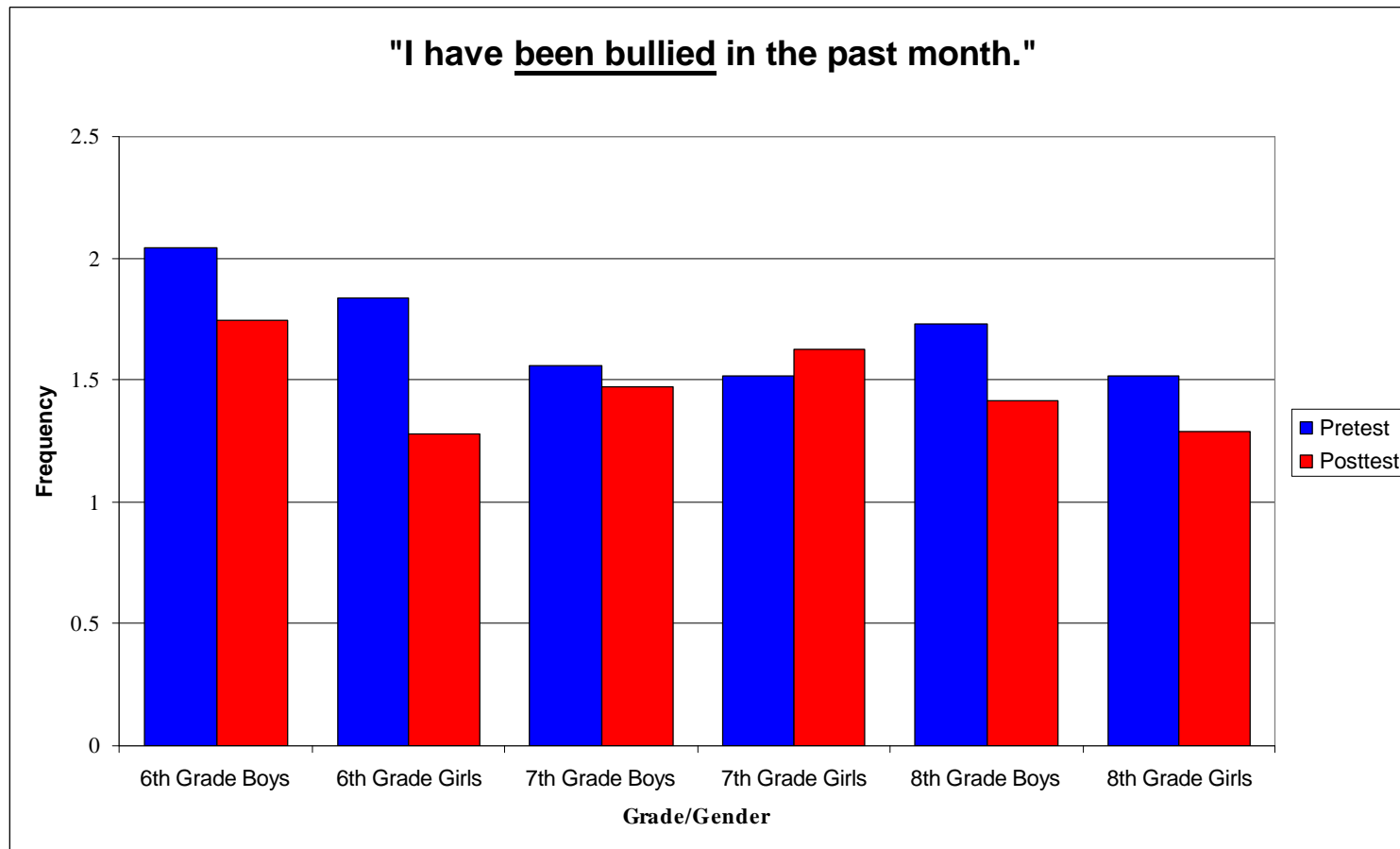
# Year 1: Bullying Victimization



Frequent victimization dropped from 14.9% to 8.4% (a 45% decline)

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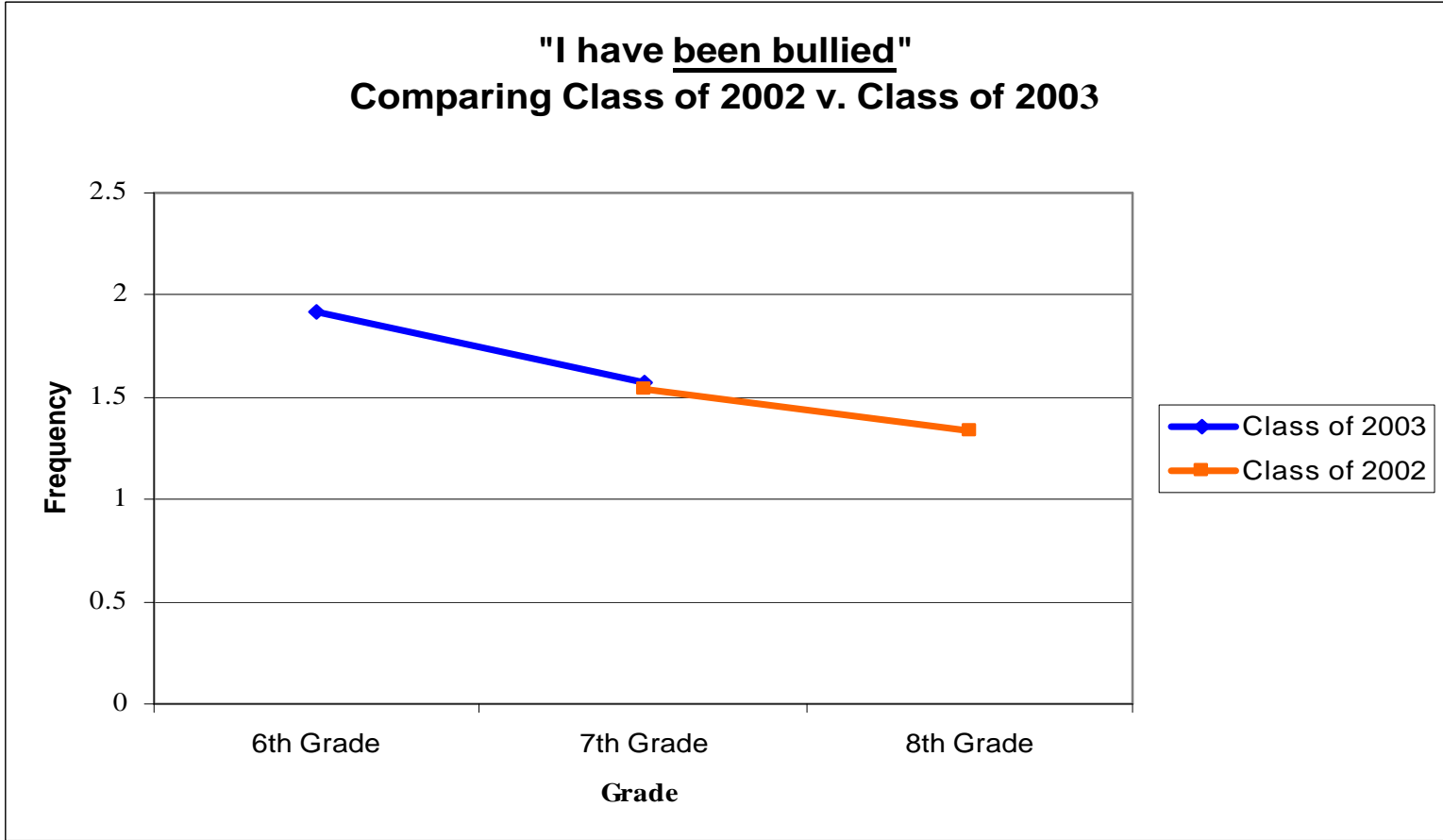
# Year 1: Bullying Victimization



Boys victimized more than girls; 6th graders more than 8th graders

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# Year 1: Bullying Victimization



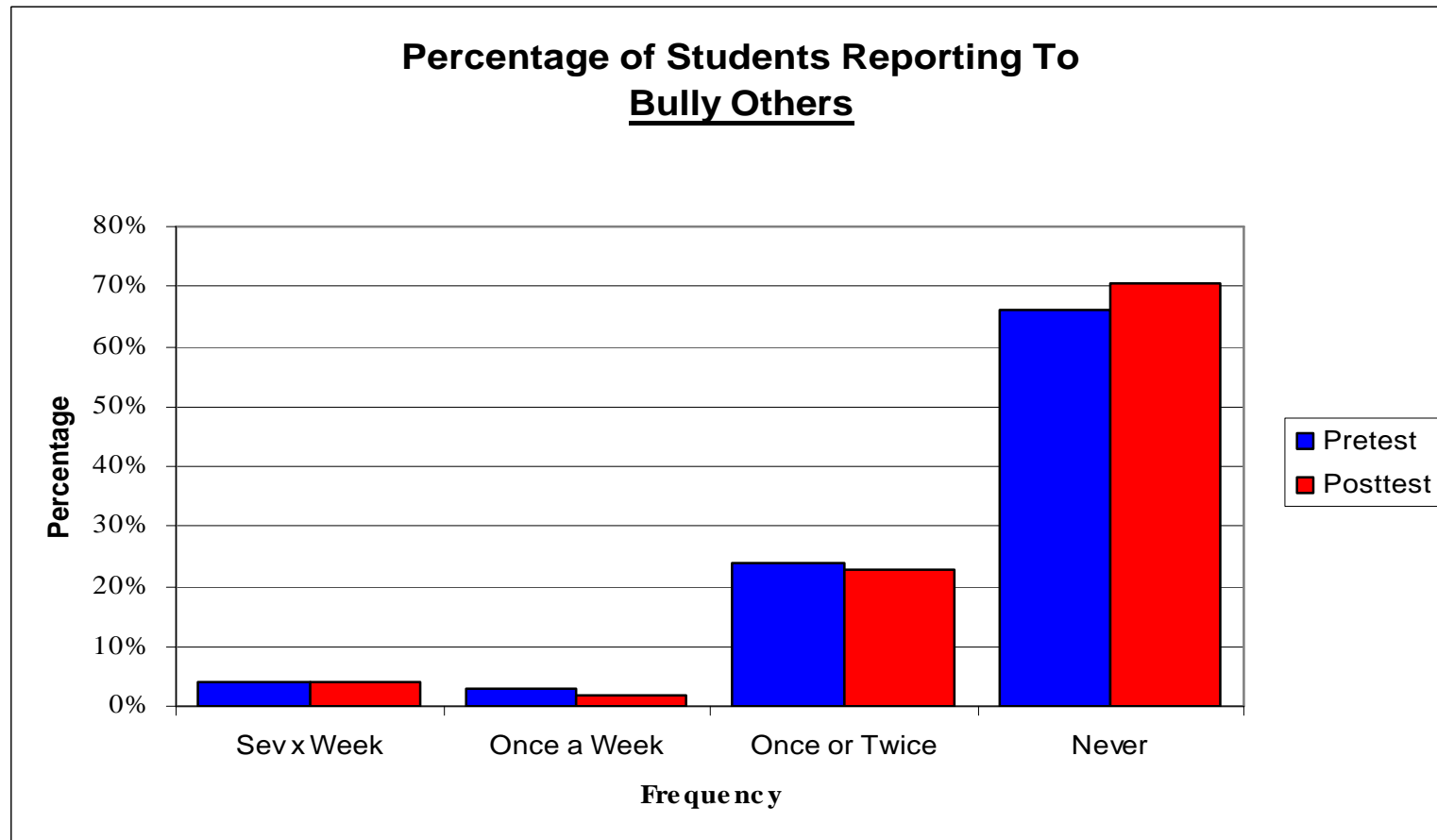
Frequent victimization declined between pre-test and Year 1 posttest



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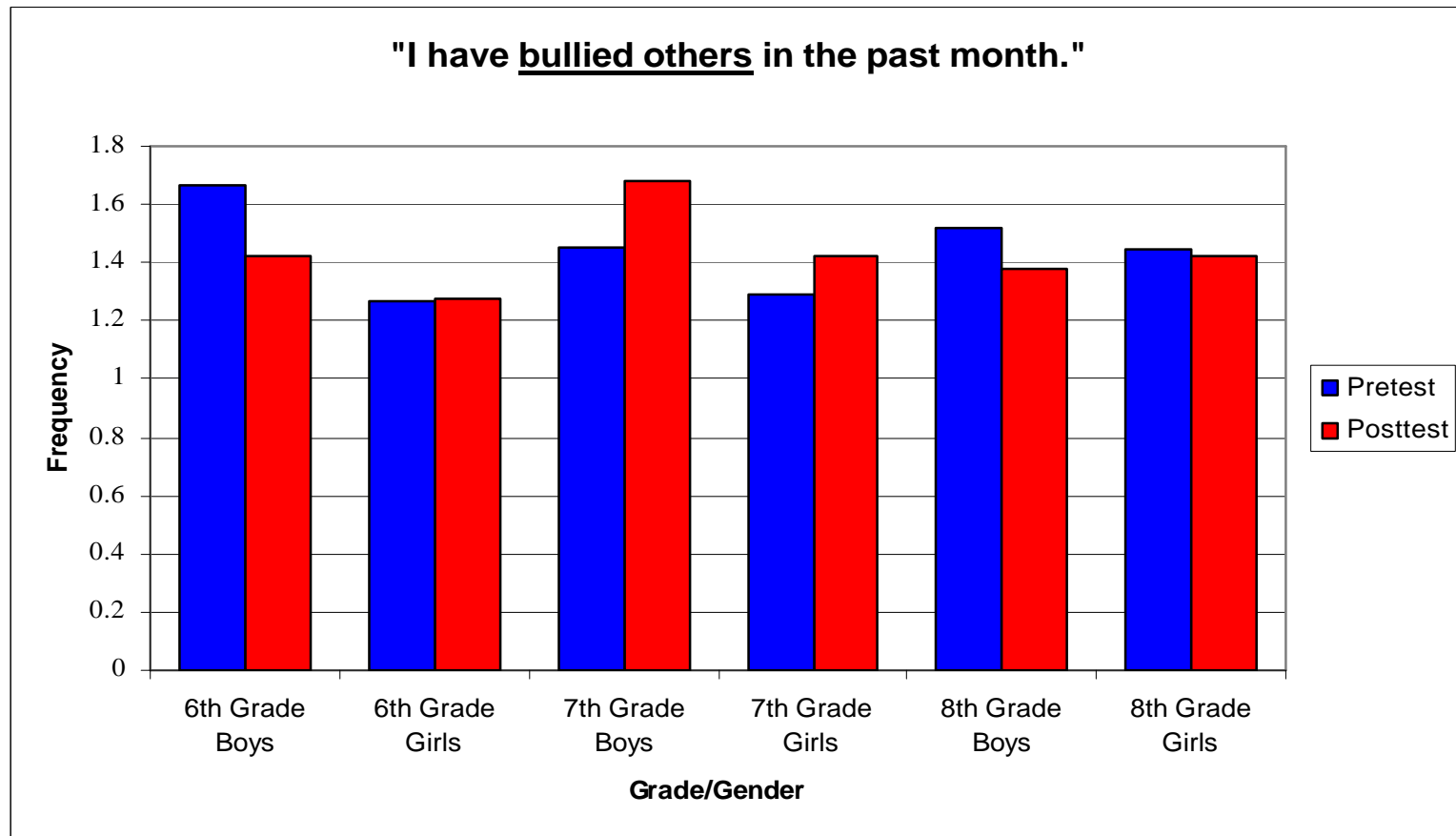
# Year 1: Bullying Others



No significant change; 6-7% of students report frequent bullying

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# Year 1: Bullying Others

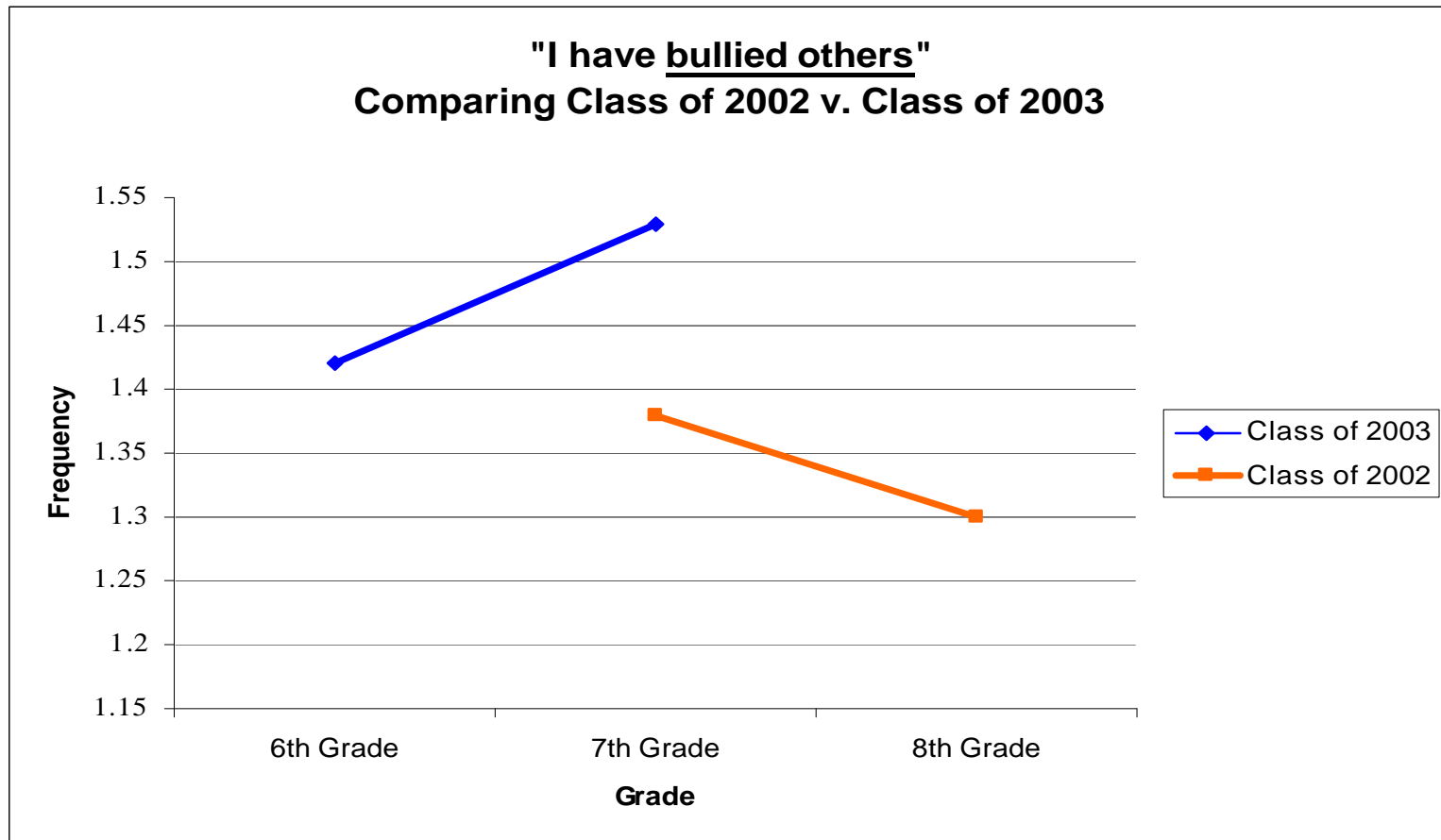


7th grade boys and girls showed an increase in bullying

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# Year 1: Bullying Others



Rates of bullying others increased for students in 7th grade at Year 1

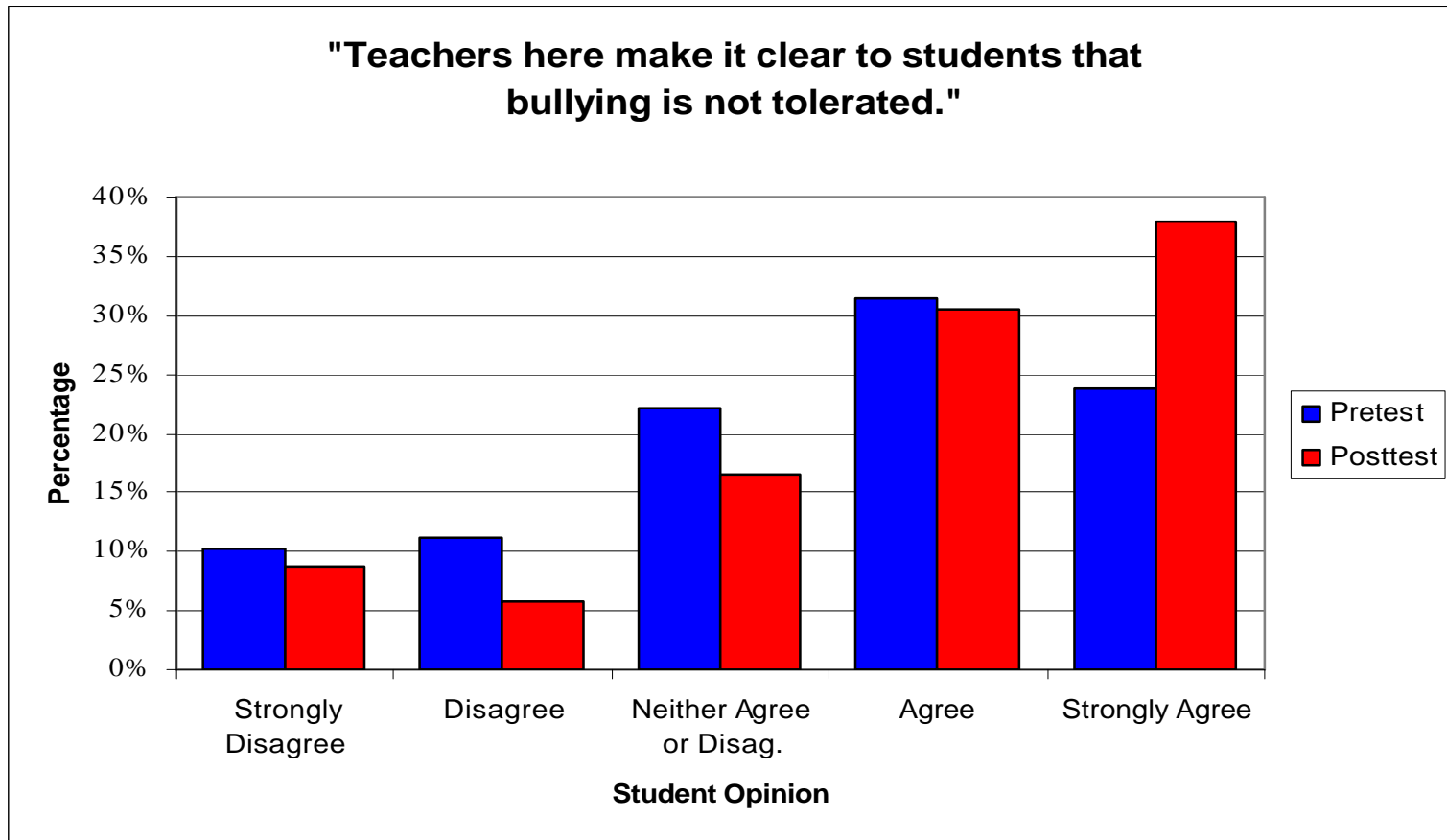
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## Year 1: Peer Aggression

- **Physical Bullying** - victimization increased. Greatest increase among boys, particularly at the 6th grade level
- **Verbal Harassment** - no change overall; 6th grade boys reported more verbal harassment than girls
- **Social Exclusion** - 25% increase in students reporting frequent exclusion (across grade levels and between genders)
- **Attitudes Toward Aggression** - no significant change

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# Year 1: Teacher Involvement

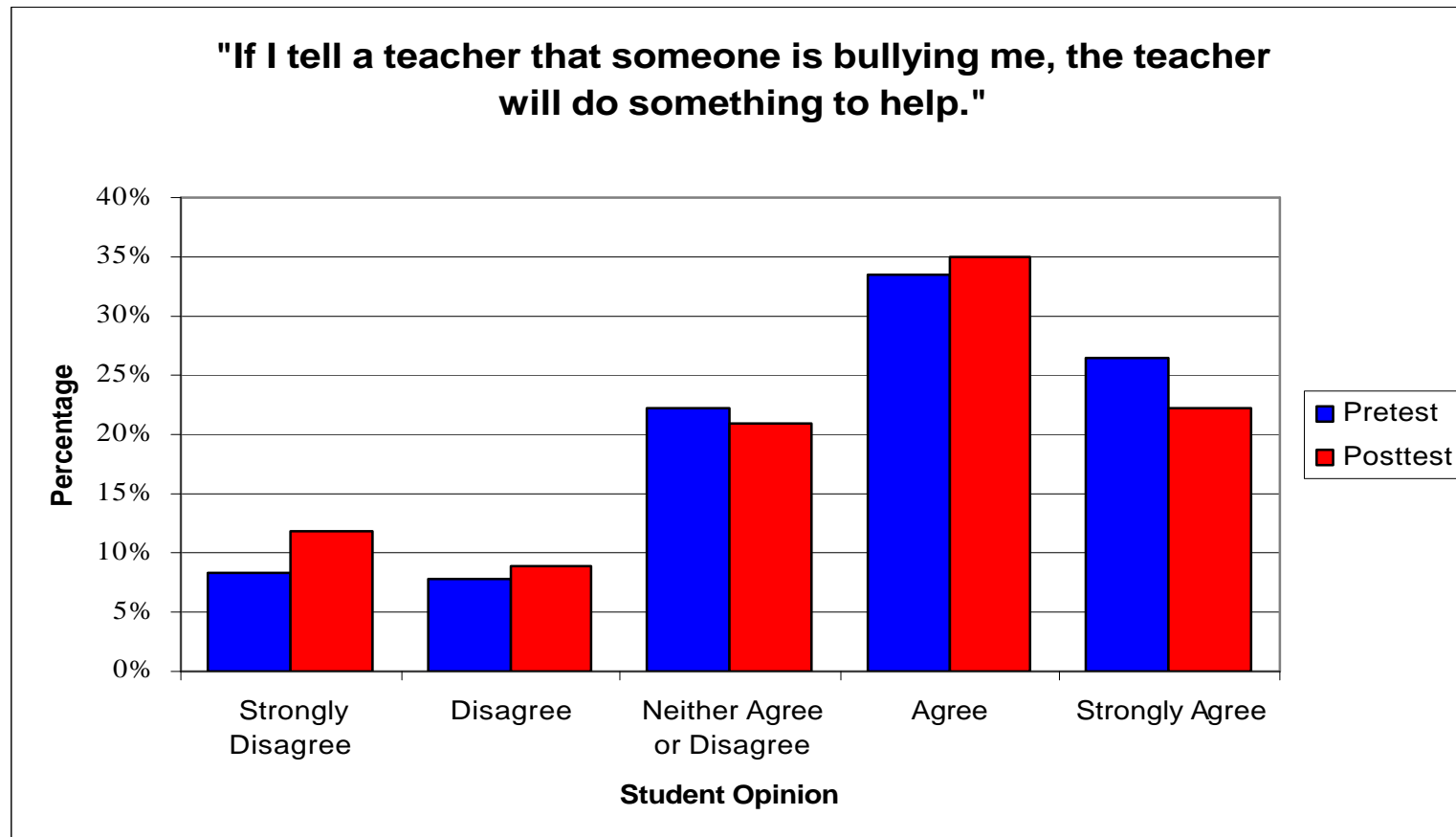


Significant increase in student perception of teacher intolerance

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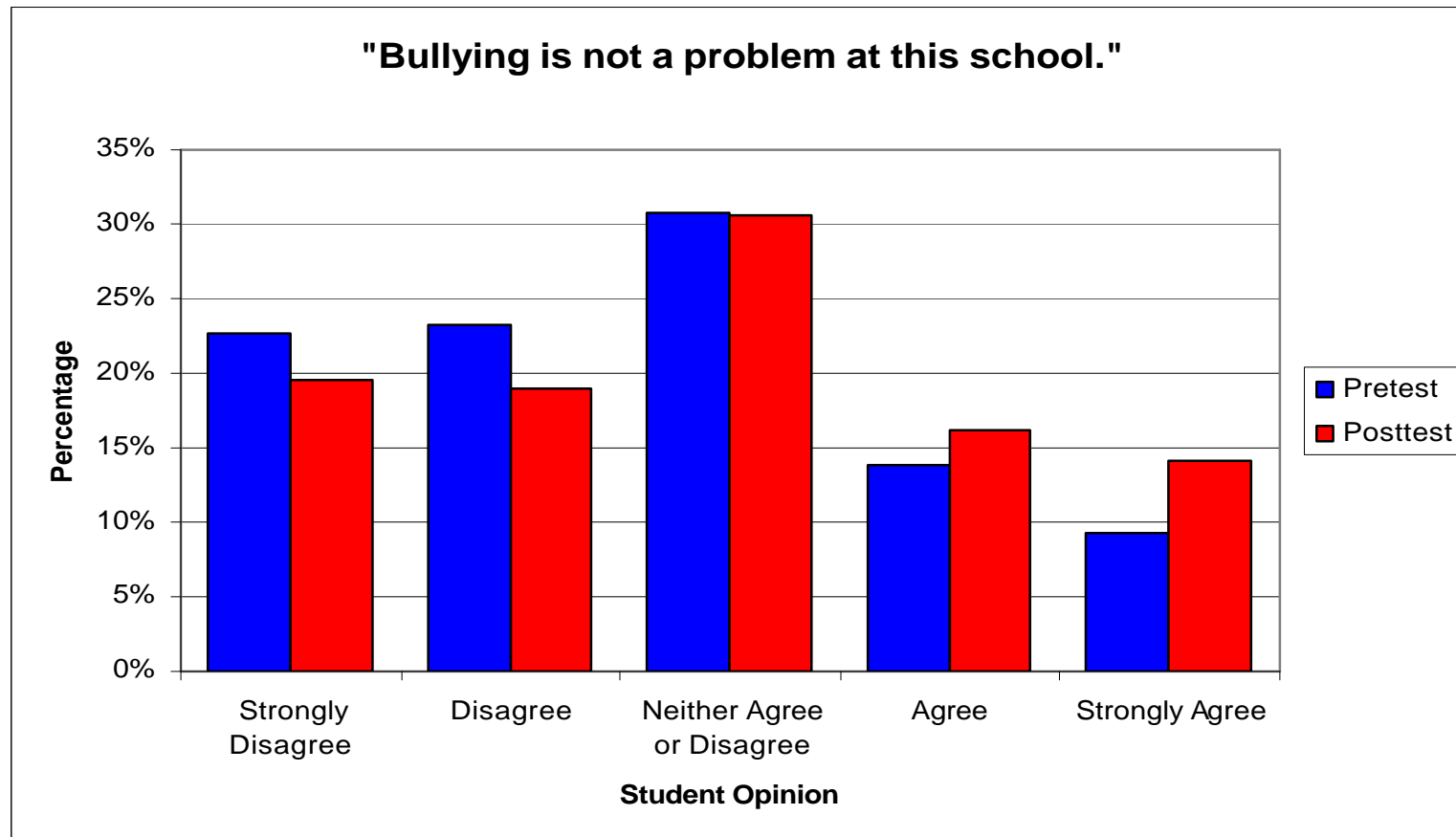
# Year 1: Teacher Involvement



No significant change in student perception of teachers stopping bullying

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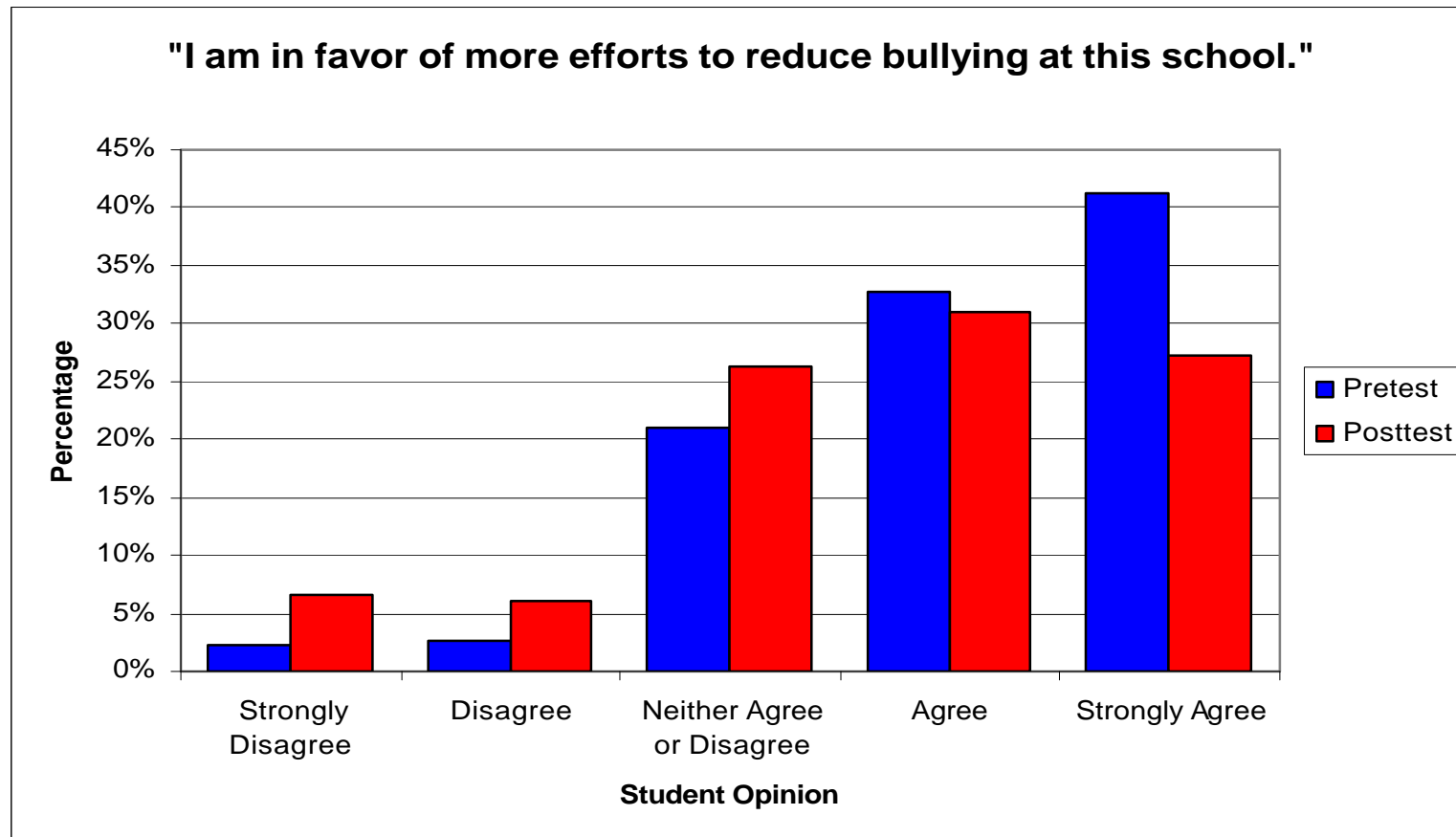
# Year 1: Intervention Attitudes



25% fewer students think bullying is a problem; 40% still concerned

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# Year 1: Intervention Attitudes



In favor of more efforts to reduce bullying dropped from 74% to 58%

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## Student Comments

- **Provide more monitoring:** One student wrote, “at least one teacher should be in the bathroom(s) and hallway(s).” Another wrote: “put cameras in the hallways, steps, or other unsafe places where there are not teachers to supervise.”
- **Increase discipline for bullies:** “If you see anything cruel or any name calling happening at school DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. Some of the bullies absolutely do not care about [in-school suspension].”
- **Offer more peer mediation and group activities:** “I think we need to make peer mediation a bigger part of this school so kids feel comfortable.”
- **Beware of student fatigue:** “for those of us who don’t bully or don’t get bullied, you are wasting learning time by the redundant repetition of the same information.”

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## Year 2: Survey Overview

- **Bullying Victimization:** Remained stable between Year 1 & Year 2; Bullying victimization increased for 6th and 8th grade girls
- **Bullying Others:** Not significantly different from Year 1; 8th grade girls reported a significant increase in bullying others
- **Peer Aggression:** Remained stable between Year 1 & Year 2; Increased among 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls
- **Student Attitudes Toward Intervention and Teacher Involvement:** Stable. Approximately 60% of students wanted more efforts to reduce bullying.

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# Lessons Learned

- 1) Garner staff-wide support (need consistent monitoring and implementation across classrooms); Increase teacher supervision in high-bullying areas
- 2) Seek student leadership, suggestions, and feedback; Keep the program interesting and engaging; offer positive group activities
- 3) Use anti-bullying lessons regularly throughout school year
- 4) Focus efforts on higher risk students (6th grade victims, chronic bullies); Provide counseling and consistent consequences for bullying



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## Study Limitations

- No comparison group or control conditions - hard to attribute effects to bullying intervention or other changes in the school environment; Self-report measure may be biased
- Surveys were anonymous making it difficult to estimate if students were reporting accurately -- some students may have skewed overall results
- Raising awareness of bullying and victimization can influence reports of bullying on self-report measures

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