

Campus Concerns

Part 1

Staff and students at ABC Junior High School (grades 7, 8 & 9) have reported concerns regarding multiple incidents of students congregating in large, loud and aggressive groups at lunch that sometimes end up confronting other large groups of students.

These confrontations have included such flash points as shouting matches, students getting into each other's faces, a little pushing, and on a few occasions have resulted in physical confrontations between both males and females. The student groups appear to be divided into Hispanic and African-American groups that confront each other, and sometimes these minority groups join together to confront groups of White students. Although the situations differ, there do seem to be a few of the same students who are repeatedly in the forefront of the confrontations.

At the same time, vandalism is occurring around the campus where the groups are congregating and/or property damage is occurring in an actual fight when the group is exceptionally large.

Another concern related to these situations is that this school has a split lunch period and some of these students are skipping classes either before or after their assigned lunch period in order to stir up the conflict or keep it going. These students are coming and going from classes at lunch time and causing disruption to the instruction in their classes.

Additional concerns, supported by data, which have become a red flag, are that the counselors and the SRO report that although school has only been in session for a few weeks, 27 mediations have been completed. Many of these mediations have involved students who have been a part of these confrontations at lunch.

Most of the students involved in the lunch conflicts and the mediations are eighth graders, many are males, but more are female. The largest ethnic group is Hispanic, while the majority of the campus is White.

In the SSAPT meeting, the SRO reports that he and the counselors have been asked to mediate a particular group of females and a couple of males regarding some reported incidents of bullying. A Hispanic female reported that she was being bullied by a group of White females. As the SRO and counselors processed through a series of mediations, it became clear that the White females were the aggressors, calling one Hispanic female names and wanting to fight with her. She has not been in an actual fight with any of the girls and has attempted to stay out of the lunch time conflicts, but has not always done so.

The Hispanic female who appeared to be the target of the aggression reported to the SRO that the group of girls appeared to be following the lead of one of the White female students, who used to be a friend of the target until a White male was involved romantically with the target. The target reported that the relationship ended when the male became controlling and threw her cell phone in a pool at a party one weekend. She also reported that multiple incidents between her and the group have escalated on the social media app the Vine, and the lunch time conflicts have been advertised on Instagram and Snapchat before they occurred, or photos of the confrontations posted after lunch.

In discussing the mediation situation between the females, the SRO clarified for the counselors and the SSAPT that the incidents were not bullying, but more accurately incidents of aggression due to the fact that the target was instigating some of the escalation on social media sites. The team agreed that the incidents were causing multiple layers of safety concerns on the campus and that multiple interventions were needed.

The officer is well respected on the campus and has built great relationships with staff, students and parents. After speaking with the victim, the officer also spoke with the teachers who have the students that have been involved in the mediations and found that many are the same students who have been skipping out on part or all of their class that coincides with one of the lunch periods. These are the same students who appear to be the major stirrers of the conflicts. These students have been suspended for their behavior in the lunch time conflicts, but even after returning to campus, they continue to skip these classes and are still seen in the large groups confronting other groups.

The SSAPT reviewed staff, student, and parent school climate surveys that reveal concerns regarding increasing conflicts between the various ethnic groups both on the campus and in the community.



Part 2

The SRO receives reports from students that synthetic marijuana is becoming increasingly available in the community. Groups of students are using this product at parties, and some is being shared on the campus. One student was transported to the ER after serious side effects were displayed on the campus last week. The SSAPT meets to discuss this new safety concern.

