

The Many Faces of Bullying

Students seem to face an increased amount of bullying at school and many children are devastated by it. There is no clear explanation for what is going wrong but several theories seem plausible. While an incident of bullying used to be shared among bystanders or those who might hear it passed along as gossip, hurtful remarks can now spread to a huge audience if posted on a social media site like Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, or Instagram. More widespread public bullying is more humiliating.

There is also evidence that young people are less able to withstand criticism or taunting. Perhaps fostered by over-protection or the “trophies for all” social environment, delicacy can thrive and deprive children of the ability to experience and recover from setbacks or failure.

Unpredictable youngsters and unprepared schools result in parents worrying about their children’s safety. Some who recall smaller neighborhood schools before the widespread consolidation of sites wonder if there are too many children for the staff to manage. There may also be deficits in staff training.

Examining a few incidents that resulted in serious consequences helps flesh out the situation.

‘Bullicide’ in Colorado

A ten-year-old Colorado girl died in

November after attempting suicide by hanging, allegedly the result of a bullying incident caught on video on campus after the school day ended. Parents of fifth grader Ashawnty Davis say their daughter confronted a bully in October, and another student — among those who watched the incident unfold — posted video of that confrontation online.

Ashawnty harmed herself two weeks later and was subsequently taken off life support at Children’s Hospital Colorado. She was in fifth grade.

The Cherry Creek School District in the Denver suburbs says it turned the video over to Aurora

police. A school district statement said, “We are looking into this matter and will take appropriate action to ensure the safety of all students involved.”

Ashawnty’s mother claims the school’s response was inadequate. She says, “When I got the call telling me that my daughter had been in a fight, they never gave me the opportunity to meet with the other parents to come to the bottom of the line.” Her mother says it was the first time her daughter was involved in a fight.



“Her family is now determined to hold educators accountable in cases of bullying and to figure out an anti-bullying policy that actually works.” Mrs. Davis says, “With the last breath in my life I’m going to make sure that the unfortunate kids are able to go to school comfortably and learn.” She says that if she

had seen the video or been given more details, she “could have taken [Ashawnty] out of the school.” She also says, “It could have been different if she would have faced the girl.”

While the school claims the family never requested a meeting with staff and the parents of others involved, Mrs. Davis says they made that request and it was denied.

Cherry Creek School District released a statement that said:

This is a heartbreaking loss for the school community. Mental health support will be made available for any students who need help processing the loss. We do not tolerate bullying of any kind in our schools and we have a comprehensive bullying prevention program in place at all of our schools. The safety and well-being of students is our highest priority, and we strive every day to ensure schools are safe, welcoming and supportive places that support learning.

(ABC13.com, 12-1-17)

There is a term for what happened in this case, which is unfortunately repeated in other schools in various locations more often than it should be. It is called “bullicide,” a suicide that results after an incident or incidences of bullying.

Death in California

In another bullicide incident, a family took their daughter off life support in December after a school bullying incident. Parents Charlene and Freddie Avila of Yucaipa say their 13-year-old daughter Rosalie left them a note and a journal outlining the bullying she experienced at her school in Calimesa, California.

The Avilas gave Rosalie’s journal to the police. Journal entries include “They told me I was ugly today” and “They were making fun of me today about my teeth.”

The family says Mesa View Middle School failed in their duty to protect their daughter after they went to the school to

complain. Mr. Avila says, “I did everything I’m supposed to do as a father, and these people did not respond, because those bullies are still at the school.” Mrs. Avila says, “The things that [students] post[ed] on social media about my daughter are unacceptable.” (CBSnews.com, 12-4-17) (FoxNews.com, 12-5-17)

Homicide in Delaware

Another incident that started with posting on social media ended in one young life lost and several others ruined. In April of 2016, a group of girls attacked sixteen-year-old Amy Joyner-Francis at her high school in Wilmington, Delaware. She was punched in the head and torso and kicked by other girls. According to *USA Today*, “Dozens of girls watched the confrontation as it unfolded in the school’s second-floor bathroom, and at least two recorded segments of it on their cellphones.” The attack resulted in Amy’s death due to complications from a previously undiagnosed heart condition. One student-attacker was found guilty of criminally negligent homicide. (4-13-17 & 6-6-17)

About 900 students in 9th through 12th grade attend Wilmington’s Howard High School of Technology. Ursula McCoy, a faculty member who worked in the school discipline office, said at the trial that violent incidents there increased from 20 during the 2014-15 school year to 46 the following year. She also said, “There may be times when [fights] are not reported.”

McCoy noted that social media posts increased threats and that she warns students to be careful what they post or say online. It is unknown exactly what provoked the attack on Joyner-Francis that resulted in her death, but there were rumors that girls were upset by something she posted online. McCoy said, “I try to warn them about being safe and being smart when using social media.” (DelawareOnline, 4-4-17)

The Howard High School website boasts that 100% of students use an electronic technology device at school and at home in “the first 1:1 iPad initiative in the state.” The school website says:

As part of our one-to-one initiative, each Howard High School student uses a school-managed Apple iPad to enhance and expand the learning environment beyond the availability of traditional school resources. Providing individual iPads to students empowers and prepares them for both the workplace and post-secondary study.

The school is “recognized by Apple as a distinguished school for continuous innovation in learning, teaching, and the school environment.”

At sentencing, Family Court Judge (See *Bullying*, page 4)

What’s Happening with Girls?

Young females are purposely harming themselves at an alarming rate.

Treatment for self harm among girls ages 10 to 14 has increased 18.8% per year — the sharpest rise among young people ages 10 to 24, according to an analysis of Emergency Department data from nearly 70 U.S. hospitals. Self-harm is often a precursor to suicide.

While many theories about why this is occurring could be floated, perhaps the best course is to look at what research has found and leave speculation for another day.

CDC Research: Mercado

Research led by Melissa Mercado, a behavioral scientist at The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), found that American girls are purposely harming themselves at an increasing and alarming rate. A recap of this research says, “Nearly 20% more young teen and preteen females have sought emergency room treatment for poisoning, cutting or harming themselves yearly since 2009.” It continues, “Girls ages 10 to 14 had an 18.8% increase per year in treatment for self-inflicted injuries — the sharpest rise among young people ages 10 to 24, ac-



According to an analysis of ER data from 66 U.S. hospitals.”

Researchers found “the overall increase in self-harm was more than 8% every year among all females studied.” Poisoning was the method used most often.

This research involved more than 43,000 hospital emergency department (ED) visits for self-inflicted injury from 2001 to 2015. They say their findings could underestimate the

problem since they only focused on ED visits and some patients could have been treated elsewhere, such as at their family doctors’ offices.

Lead researcher Mercado says, “Self-inflicted injury is one of the strongest risk factors for suicide.” She says, “In 2015, suicide was the second leading cause of death among U.S. youth aged 10 to 24 years.”

Mercado’s team found that no similar increase was found among young males. Researchers can’t say precisely why rates remained stable for males but jumped so

(See *Girls*, page 4)

EDUCATION BRIEFS

The 2018 International Classification of Diseases diagnostic manual issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) will name “gaming disorder” as “a serious health condition to be monitored.” (MSN.com, 12-22-17) The WHO is also expected to declassify transgenerism as a mental disorder. Ben Shapiro and others say the new manual will purport that addiction to video games is real “but believing that you are a member of the opposite sex isn’t a mental disorder at all.” Shapiro says, “And then the scientific community wonders why laypeople don’t take their completely anti-scientific redefinition of mental illness seriously.” (DailyWire.com, 12-27-17)

In June 2017, hackers posted three offensive tweets on the St. Lucie School District Twitter account. It took over 12 hours for the Florida school to regain control due to an inadequate response from Twitter. Sent to over 2,700 followers, all three posts were insults to African Americans, but the anonymous hacker said they were released for shock value and not motivated by racism. In September of 2017, hackers took over the Twitter account of Foothill High School near Las Vegas, Nevada. It took “almost two days to get the offensive messages removed.” Schools sometimes threaten to discipline those who pass along such content. One security expert says, “If they do discipline a student for sharing the content, they will lose any lawsuit arising out of the matter” because students are merely sharing what the school district shared with them. In at least the Florida incident, hackers tried to extort money to remove the tweets. Serious concerns remain about how well technology is guarded by school districts. The slow response from Twitter is also problematic. St. Lucie superintendent Wayne Gent said he was “mad as hell” about “how long it took Twitter to remove the racist messages posted from his district’s account.” (*Education Week*, 10-11-17)

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Wreaths Across America

On a frigidly cold December day, almost 60 student members of Virginia’s North Stafford High School Air Force Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps arrived at Quantico National Cemetery to help unload 20,000 wreaths from four cargo trucks. Joined by many others, they then solemnly placed the wreaths on the graves of fallen service members.

On December 16, American Heritage Girls from the Evangelical Friends Church of Newport, Rhode Island, helped lay more than 750 fresh green wreaths tied with red ribbons on veterans’ graves at Island Cemetery. The girls had helped locate graves of veterans in the cemetery early that autumn in preparation for their Christmas mission.

In New Jersey, Boy Scouts from seven Sussex County troops served as honor guards and placed wreaths at three area cemeteries. As each wreath was laid, the name of the veteran was read aloud and the scouts thanked them for their service.

It was no accident that many young people laid wreaths, spoke the names of veterans, and thanked them for their service this Christmas season. It is a tra-

dition started 26 years ago by Morrill Worcester of Maine. In 1992, Worcester’s wreath company had an over supply of the fresh green decorations. Harkening back to a trip to Washington, D.C. that he won when he was a 12-year-old paperboy for the *Bangor Daily News*, he knew those extras were destined for Arlington National Cemetery.

Worcester’s initial wreath ceremony led to a tradition, a non-profit organization, and a quest to educate. This December, Wreaths For America placed over 245,000 wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery and volunteers across the nation placed wreaths in over 1,200 more locations. The Arlington wreaths were transported by a caravan that included semi-trucks and police escorts traveling from Maine to Virginia in what is called “the country’s longest veterans parade.”

Founder Morrill Worcester says, “Our annual convoy from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery stops at many schools along the way, introducing young people to veterans and our mission to honor them.”

Thank You, Veterans!



MALLARD FILLMORE / by Bruce Tinsley



Children Taking a Knee

Player protests during National Football League (NFL) games have affected young people at schools, in their extracurricular activities, and at their outside sporting events.

NFL players have been role models for many years. Some view this as unfortunate since the off-field behavior of some NFL players is less than exemplary.

Players who refused to stand for the “Star Spangled Banner” and instead got down on one knee during the past two seasons are another reason to worry about young people idolizing them.

In September, every player in the eight-year-old and younger Cahokia Quarterback Club football team in Belleville, Illinois “took a knee” instead of standing for the national anthem. This action was supported by their coach and their parents. “When the anthem started, the Cahokia third graders immediately took a knee where they were standing.” (Fox2Now.com, 9-18-17)

The Mascoutah High School football team in Illinois made a different

choice during their homecoming game on September 29. The team took the field “with members of local law enforcement, firefighters, and veterans.” The coach said that “service and doing things for the greater good is engrained” among the student population. (*Belleville News-Democrat*, 9-29-17)

When famed former Notre Dame football coach Lou Holtz was interviewed on Fox News about the protests, he said that respect is not taught very well today in schools and sometimes not reinforced at home. He made a call for “Respect for your parents, respect for teachers, respect for elderly, respect for women, respect for law.” (IRJ.com, 9-30-17)

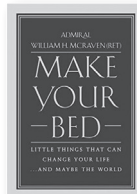
Meanwhile, during the 2017 football season, hundreds of NFL players, some of whom attended college free (some at public universities) and all of whom made their fortunes in America, refused to stand for the “Star Spangled Banner” before playing their games in football stadiums at least partially paid for by taxpayers. And children were watching.



Book of the Month



Make Your Bed: Little Things That Can Change Your Life ... And Maybe the World, Admiral William H. McRaven, Grand Central Publishing, 2017, \$18.00



It’s not often that readers are able to garner advice from a Navy SEAL who also heads up a university system but just such an opportunity is offered by this book. Admiral McRaven is retired from the U.S. Navy and is now Chancellor of the University of Texas System.

McRaven addressed the University of Texas at Austin graduating class in May of 2014, delivering a speech so powerful that it has been viewed on YouTube over 10 million times. This book is an elaboration of what the admiral said that day.

Ten chapters of the book offer ways to cope with the unfairness of life, failures, bullying, and more. McRaven encourages readers to improve their outlook; their understanding of other people; and to become tougher and more courageous.

The title comes from Chapter One, “Start Your Day with a Task Completed.” It tells readers what a correctly made bed means at the Coronado, California barracks where McRaven began his SEAL training. He learned bed making was the first task of the day and the skill involved more effort than he expected. Yes, a coin does actually need to flip several feet in the air when dropped on the taut linens.

Recovering from a parachuting accident at the time of the 9-11 terrorist attacks, McRaven longed to again be strong enough to make his bed. The task became symbolic to him. He explains that it isn’t just illness, injury, loss, or fighting in combat that challenges the human spirit. He writes:

It is daily life that needs this same sense of structure. Nothing can replace the strength and comfort of one’s faith, but sometimes the simple act of making your bed can give you the lift you need to start your day and provide you the satisfaction to end it right. If you want to change your life and maybe world — start off by making your bed!

Being put on “The Circus” list during Navy SEAL training means an extra two hours of strenuous workout at the end of the grueling day, as punishment for not performing well enough during the earlier routine. It is dreaded. McRaven describes how the punishment results in improved stamina. He says:

In life you will face a lot of Circuses. You will pay for your failures. But, if you persevere, if you let those failures teach you and strengthen you, then you will be prepared to handle life’s toughest moments.

FOCUS: Technological Opium Dens

by Denis Ian

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“Our entire universe is probably in a tiny glass jar somewhere, placed on a shelf in some alien child’s room as a science fair project that got a C minus ...”

Leave it up to a meme, the new technological bumper-sticker, to tutor us about our probable insignificance and immaturity.

It’s smart to be reminded of how dumb we are.

It seems we’re getting way ahead of ourselves. Chugging down this technological speedway ... and some of the most fragile passengers haven’t any seat belts at all.

At the moment “... it’s hard to know how many of us in this perpetually plugged-in society have a serious problem,” according to the executive director of Common Sense Media.

Internet addiction and use of technology is creating troubles for some young people.

Recognizing there are problems associated with technology use is at least a start. But that hasn’t slowed us down one bit.

We’re outfitting kids with technological gizmos we don’t even understand

— giving them super-powerful thingamajigs we think of as toys. But they’re not toys at all.

Our homes are rigged like technological opium dens. High-tech paraphernalia everywhere, doing everything. We command it all by voice or touch. And it conveniences our lives. A point-and-click existence pre-programmed almost thoughtlessly.

And therein lies the danger. Microsoft predicts that “virtual reality technology will soon be so powerful that it will cause drug-like hallucinations,” as reported in the *New York Post* in 2016.

Kids are famous for finding new uses for usual things. They turn pots into drums, dogs into horses, and curtains into capes. Why shouldn’t they do the same with these whatchamacallits? Why wouldn’t they partner them with their own imaginations?

But are they mature enough for all of this? Ripened enough to slot it into their lives as it should be? Lots doubt that ... and our own experiences make us doubt it, too.

Some professionals are candid with parents ... “I tell them, you’re the drug dealer ... You need to understand what you’re modeling to this child.” And parents nod ... and agree ... and then okay the latest smart-phone upgrade. For the whole family.

Hmmm, old advice for new sins — ignored again. Not much different than

the teenage beer lecture while sipping a Martini.

And then there are the schools.

Teachers will soon function more like R2D2. File cabinets have been replaced with data dump-sites. Lessons are downloaded from some far-away curriculum depository. Quizzes, tests, and on-line involvements are assessed and clumped together to form digital student profiles of the “guinea pig generation.”

There are some who even want body language recorded and inspected for this or that. And others are now scanning lunch-trays for data crumbs.

And students, “kids” in real-life speak, are provided with finger-print access to a never-ending array of screen-challenges. Programmed adventures they’re sure to flip away from their intended purposes because that’s what kids do.

But whether at home or at school, reality will be further blurred as these escapades morph into escapes — separating kids from the usual human experiences that round out a person.

Those interactions that grow a personality and refine a temperament.

They just might become that “Lost Generation” who will shrink the universe so that it does fit in the jar on the shelf ... and then inflate their own significance way beyond reality. And that is an unhealthy place with scary consequences.

All of this could make for some especially uncute kids. And an unbeautiful society. A nightmarish cosmos of thumb-pressing Pavlovian protégés unable to break free from their absorbing screen-world.

We know the short-term effects. It’s the long-range outcomes that will transform this society into some freaky, asocial, anti-interactive collection of creepy adolescent gamers and cyborgs on their way to droidhood.

distinguishable from one another ... creepy duplicates of each other.

And that should make everyone extra-happy. And the educators will approve of the homogenized results. And there will be algorithmic jubilation that the mystery of true scholarship has finally been unlocked.

Lawmakers will laurel themselves. Superintendents and principals will beat their chests. And classroom teachers will sigh with relief ... and cease to agonize over their careers.

And the robotized, joyless crop of young learners will have met very important benchmarks and be prepared for ... for what? More tests? More measures? Where does this take us?

In the years ahead ... as screen time increases and more gadgets appear at home and at school ... it will presage a cultural change not many have envisaged carefully enough.

“We’re largely flying blind because we’ve done so little research” that “it’s hard to know how many of us in this perpetually plugged-in society have a serious problem.” Oh, boy!

Homes will become isolated islands surrounded by technological moats. Unique will be the child who exhibits even the slightest social grace and poise.

Owning a personality might become a status acquisition ... likely nurtured by academies specializing in such mysteries as conversation, charm, and passable witticism.

And social status may be measured by one’s fearlessness in the face of large gatherings of people that might require dinner-speak, archaic table-manners, and synchronized choreography syncopated to live music ... that dying art of “dancing,” which will be as rare as a meteor fly-by.

Perhaps we should S.O.S. Rod Serling and fetch him back from his Twilight Zone resting place so he can script a less frightening climax than what now seems inevitable.

The future is under construction and too few actually understand what the hell will emerge. But it’s going to make some already old authors ... think Huxley and Orwell ... seem like modern-day Nos-tradamuses.

Meanwhile, double-think your own choices as we all hyper-speed through this queer age of progress. And forgive yourselves. Your parents once jostled your world with electric typewriters, princess phones, and blaring eight-track tapes ... and you turned out alright. Didn’t you?

I so wanna be wrong about this. Real wrong.



Genetically Modified Children

by Denis Ian

Originally published December 6, 2017. Reprinted with permission.

There is no virtue in making children so brave that they might withstand the idiocy of adults.

If schools think education is all about testing, they’ve already forfeited their privilege to enjoy your child. Remember that.

This testing madness has the tell-tale symptoms of a sick obsession ... a creepy neurosis that screams of unhealthy. And now ... this testing takes many forms ... and it’s part of nearly every school day.

Opting out of spring assessments is like passing out snorkels on the Titanic.

Competency based education is here — and that means nearly daily testing experiences for your children ... and there’s no escaping it.

Pressure is a fact of life, and so are tests and assessments. But now the pressure to perform is border-line child abuse. Too many youngsters and their families are paying a disturbing price for this unhealthy obsession.

In some instances, we’re talking about children less than a hundred months old. Instead of marking exciting,

new inches on door jambs, some egg-head-theoreticians have determined that growth has but one measure — and that’s by tests.

Overly serious, overly consequential, overly emphasized tests. How come?

These schools are populated by brand new people who are just as easily measured by months as they can be measured by years. All sprouting at different speeds, while acquiring all sorts of skills and talents in terribly uneven spurts because that’s how Mother Nature does things.

More and more, we’re treating these little learners like programmable spud-people ... GMOs ... “genetically modified organisms,” in lab-speak. And too many schools have become educational petri dishes — and the little ones are the abused lab rats.

And the most exhausting and crushing experiments of all involve testing.

Testing, I guess, is supposed to produce a bumper-crop of genetically identical kid-sprouts ... each the same when measured and charted and graphed. In-



(See GMO Children, page 4)

GMO Children *(Continued from page 3)*

When did did tests become the tape measures of success? The rudder of a child's education? When did they become almighty?

Children don't ripen on anyone's schedule. They sprout at different speeds ... the way Mother Nature intended. Some rush straight to ripe in no time at all. Others take their time.

But they all catch up ... and stand side by side ... and few remember who were the early sprouters or the tardy bloomers.

So why this great worry?

Why all the upset?

For what?

Why all this dread for itty-bitty people who've just mastered looping their

own belts ... and only recently cured themselves of putting their underpants on backwards?

And who thinks jittering teachers over this sort of nonsense makes them better at their craft? It doesn't. It only tensions the atmosphere and clouds learning with pointless anxiety.

Let the gardeners garden and let the seedlings grow as they will. And remember — God never intended for all of them to be perfectly perfect at all of the same things ... at the same moment.

Ease up.

They'll ripen well enough in spite of the neurotic insistence of disconnected theoreticians who think that genius is found on the nib of a No. 2 pencil.

Cognitive Privilege: the Excuse du Jour

by Denis Ian

Originally published on November 29, 2017. Reprinted with permission.

Here we go again with the progressive-liberal nonsense *du jour*.

Remember this Obama thud? "... if you've been successful, you didn't get there on your own."

That sort of garbage logic is still around, polluting circumstances of all sorts, excusing ne'er-do-wells and the profoundly lazy from any responsible acceptance of their own failings.

An oratorical lurch to justify favoring some over others, while excusing some and not others.

Excuses. Excuses. And more excuses.

Now it seems some Asian-American parents have decided to challenge the so-called "level playing field" — that disturbing practice of overly favoring the less talented over the more successful.

That justification for lowering standards for some, while raising them for others so that in some situations, in this case college admissions, it looks more like "the world of diversity" some insist must be created on campus.

So, are you ready for this?

There now exists ... sit down!

"Cognitive privilege."

Did you get that?

"Cognitive privilege."

The argued point that some of us are simply born with these excelling qualities. That some virtues are congenital. Innate. Intrinsic.

And others ... well others are not so blessed. They are cheated. Disadvantaged.

That some are born into such extraordinary circumstances that success is ... unavoidable. Inevitable for some but not for others.

This is the sort of crap we have endured because some societal engineers refuse to acknowledge the natural unevenness of talent in the human race ... and the human variables of our existence.

They'd rather ignore obvious realities than admit to themselves — and to the not-so-achieving — that there are some among us who own a special sort of ambition to excel. And that there are also some who are only vaguely familiar with

such ambitions. And lots who are downright allergic to aspirations of any sort.

And it seems true that some talents might be God-given ... or at least somewhat unexplainable ... and imbued in some and not others. Perhaps singing talent ... maybe artistic talents ... or even simple physical advantages for certain sports.

But even with those gifts there still remains a need for ambition ... a drive to excel ... to develop those gifts. And that demands hard work. Discipline. Self-command.

But the progressive propagandists would rather drag everyone down to a sub-par standard than have anyone lauded as excellent. Or superior. Or distinguished.

Because that would wound some of the less gifted. The ones without ambition or drive. And that bit of reality shouldn't ever exist. It's too harsh. Too real. Too paralyzing and too traumatic.

And this is all guarded by the guilt-inducing shadow of political correctness which prevents those who see the obvious absurdity from speaking up ... and championing excellence and merit.

And so those who brought us such nonsense as "white privilege" and "grammar discrimination" and the "reading disadvantaged" will undoubtedly continue on this asinine path and voodoo up even more nonsense to explain away the real human condition.

These are the kinds of unspotlighted issues that were, in fact, part of the presidential election last fall. And they have not been resolved.

In fact, the progressive left seems more insistent than ever that any contact with reality must be matted with a feathered bed of excuses.

America is not buying this crap anymore.

Denis Ian is a retired secondary teacher from New York. He taught social studies for nearly 34 years in a well-respected public school district and was involved in numerous reforms and educational innovations during his career. He's now devoted to the anti-Common Core movement. His work has been published nationwide and also appears at his blog, DenisIanBlog.Wordpress.com.

Bullying *(Continued from page 1)*

Robert Coonin said, "It is a case in which no one is looking to determine who wins and who loses because everyone has lost."

Mother Arrested for Trying to Protect Daughter

Fast forward to September of 2017. While news reports of bullying and violence at schools proliferate, one mother

who tried to do something to put a stop to it for her child has been arrested. Sarah Sims says her nine-year-old daughter was being bullied at Ocean View Elementary School in Norfolk, Virginia. Sims says she repeatedly called and sent emails to the school seeking help for her child but got no response. She decided to put a recording device in her daughter's backpack to record the bullying in order to bolster her claims and hopefully elicit help from the school. Sims says she took "actions into her own hands" because she "wanted to prove that nothing was being done to help her 4th-grade daughter."

The recorder was found in the backpack. A month after the initial discovery of the device, the young student's mother was arrested and charged with "felony use of a device to intercept oral com-



munication and misdemeanor contributing to the delinquency of a minor." The charges could result in five years in jail. The mother's attorney says, "We are at the very early stages of this, but even at the early stages I think the community needs to know that this is happening, because any parent out there that is sending

their child to school now could be at risk for something that happened to Sarah."

Sarah Sims says, "The thing that bothers me the most is that I am yet to get a response from anyone in the administration."

A preliminary hearing is scheduled for January. (WAVY.com, 11-17-17)

Two students were so devastated by bullying that they killed themselves. Another was beaten and died at school, allegedly over something she posted online that angered others. A mother tried to use technology to keep her daughter safe at school but ended up arrested. Finding ways to successfully navigate in a technologically advanced environment is creating complicated, confusing, and sometimes dangerous situations at schools. Schools, families, and society as a whole have not yet learned how to adapt and keep children safe.

Girls *(Continued from page 1)*

dramatically among girls. Overall, ED visits due to self-harm among boys and girls rose nearly 6% since 2008. Mercado says that "the data used in this study does not allow us to understand why rates have increased among females." She continues, "However, these findings are consistent with previously reported upward trends in youth suicide rates during 1999-2014." Those reports have documented rate increases after 2006, with 10- to 14-year-old females at greatest risk.

"These findings also coincide with increased reports of depression among youth, especially girls," Mercado said. She stressed that "suicide is preventable."

Researcher Melissa Mercado is a board member of StopBullying.gov, a U.S. government website where parents, teachers, school districts, and others can find helpful resources.

Social Media, Depression, and Suicide: Research by Twenge

A separate study published in *Clinical Psychological Science* "identified a

surge in depression incidence, suicidal thoughts and suicide among teenage girls." Jean Twenge of San Diego State University led this study which linked increased depression to time spent online and on social media.

Twenge, who is a professor of psychology, says, "It is imperative that we determine why so many more girls are harming themselves." She says these results add to "the mounting evidence for a sudden increase in mental health issues, especially for girls."

Based on her research, Twenge offered some advice to parents. She says, "Be aware that seeing friends in person is better for mental health than communicating via the phone." She also says it is important that teens shut off phones at night and that they get enough sleep.

Twenge says, "We found that suicide risk factors increased after two hours a day or more of electronic device use, suggesting that keeping use to two hours a day or less is a reasonable limit to set." (HealthDay.com, 11-21-17) (WebMD.com, 11-21-17)



IN THEIR OWN (GOOD) WORDS

"A child who is allowed to be disrespectful to his parents will not have true respect for anyone."

— Billy Graham, Christian Evangelist
Born November 7, 1918