

[Get the Patch Newsletter \(#newsletter_signup_panel_dialog\)](#)

[Schools](#)

Community Forum Discusses Bullying Prevention

On March 28 at Holliston High, a forum on bullying prevention and intervention gave parents an overview of the forms of modern bullying and how to address it.

By [Megan Parks \(/users/megan-parks\)](#) | [Email the author \(#\)](#) | 11:09am

On Monday in the Holliston High auditorium, [Holliston Public Schools \(http://holliston.patch.com/listings/holliston-public-schools\)](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/holliston-public-schools), [Holliston PTSA \(http://www.hollistonptsa.org/\)](http://www.hollistonptsa.org/), [Holliston Youth and Family Services \(http://holliston.patch.com/listings/town-of-holliston-youth-and-family-services\)](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/town-of-holliston-youth-and-family-services) and [Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center \(http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/\)](http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/) (MARC) held the a "Community Forum on Bullying Prevention and Intervention: Building a Kind and Caring Culture." This was the second step in the school system's three-pronged approach to reducing bullying in the school system.

[The first step \(http://holliston.patch.com/articles/holliston-schools-reworking-anti-bullying-plan\)](http://holliston.patch.com/articles/holliston-schools-reworking-anti-bullying-plan) was to create anti-bullying policies, which are being clarified and altered in order to meet state regulations. ([Click here \(http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/Docs/HPSBP.pdf\)](http://www.holliston.k12.ma.us/Docs/HPSBP.pdf) to view the current draft.) The third step will be the tangible reduction of bullying, according to John Harutunian, Assistant Principal of [Adams Middle School \(http://holliston.patch.com/listings/robert-h-adams-middle-school\)](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/robert-h-adams-middle-school).

"This forum isn't just about raising awareness about bullying. We hope to also create a kind and caring environment for the children," said Harutunian, who was the opening speaker of the forum.

The keynote speaker was Nicole Wilson from the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center. She gave a one-hour informative presentation, covering everything from defining the different forms of modern-day bullying to how adults can assist victims of bullying and curb the negative actions of kids who are bullying.

"Today's bullying is different. It's no longer the mean, bigger kid picking on weaker kids, stealing lunch money. Today's bully is popular, has lots of friends and could very well be liked by teachers and coaches," said Wilson.

How bullying occurs has also drastically changed since parents were kids. Due to current technology, children can also be at risk of cyberbullying. This occurs through the Internet and cell phones in the form of instant messaging, chat, texting, posting photos and polls, according to Wilson. Kids spread rumors, create fake profiles, post threats, write lies, send/post images and sext (send provocative/nude photos over the Internet), noted Wilson. But spreading rumors is reported as the number one problem with cyberbullying.

MARC recommends that parents monitor their children online and discuss the importance of not giving out online passwords and codes to others. Nothing posted on the Internet is ever really "private," said Wilson, especially when it comes to social network sites such as Facebook.


For further information regarding cyberbullying, concerns surrounding your child and Facebook, visit MARC's [website \(http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/papub.html\)](http://webhost.bridgew.edu/marc/papub.html).

Wilson concluded her presentation by identifying signs that your child could be bullied and how to respond if your child is a victim. One of the most important things parents can do is to create an open dialogue with your child from an early age about

bullying, said Wilson.

Following Wilson's presentation, staff from Holliston's school system, along with Chad Thompson with the [Holliston Police Department](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/holliston-police-department) and Margaret Fitzpatrick with [Holliston Youth and Family Services](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/town-of-holliston-youth-and-family-services), sat on a panel to answer questions from the audience.

[Holliston Public Schools](http://holliston.patch.com/listings/holliston-public-schools) plans to hold future bully awareness events for parents in the upcoming months.

 SEE NEXT IN SCHOOLS
[Imagination Finds Its Destination: Knoxville](http://holliston.patch.com/articles/destination-knoxville) ([/articles/destination-knoxville](http://holliston.patch.com/articles/destination-knoxville))

