

Government

District Attorney Morrissey & Norfolk Advocates For Children Present Anti-Bullying Conference

Editor's Note: The following is a press release from Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey's office.

12:00pm



Bullying problems don't start in high school. Or middle school.

"This issue is beginning in elementary school and we are entirely missing the boat," said Elizabeth K. Englander, who heads the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State University. Her organization has studied bullying data on more than 20,000 Massachusetts School children.

Professor Englander was talking to dozens of educators and law enforcement officers gathered April 7 at the Bullying & Cyber-Bullying Conference presented by Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey and the Norfolk Advocates for Children. Roughly 70 attended, representing more than half of the communities in Norfolk County, including Dover Police Officers Harold Grabert and Ryan Menice, and Dover-Sherborn guidance counselor Joann Kenney.

The conference opened with Englander's research-based suggestions for educators on preventing bullying in schools, and productively diffusing bullying situations when they occur. The medical and psychological impact of bullying on children was explained by Children's Hospital physician Peter C. Raffalli and psychologist Soundhari Balaguru. The new bullying law was explained by Assistant AG Gabrielle Viator, and DA Morrissey's director of Juvenile Programs Dan Feeny and NAC consultant Erin McIntyre discussed the DA's prevention programs for students.

The seminar, funded by a grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety, provided a lot of information crammed into a few hours, but at the end of the event the room was still full. Participants left with a hundred-page manual on understanding and fighting bullying.

"Every case of bullying that can be prevented before it starts, rather than punished in its aftermath, is of huge importance to the children involved, their parents and their community," Norfolk District Attorney Michael W. Morrissey said.

The conference was held April 7 at the conference center at the Bank of Canton, which donated its use. "The NAC model is based on many community partners, both public and private, joining our work to help children in need," DA Morrissey said. "This conference was a perfect example of that model at work."

Norfolk Advocates for Children is a 501(c)3 organization providing services to children who have been sexually and physically abused in Norfolk County. For more information, visit: <http://www.norfolkadvocatesforchildren.com/>