

Anti-bullying strategy unveiled

The manual outlines ways to combat violence and bullying in schools.

By **RANDY RICHMOND, SUN MEDIA**

Every English speaking school in Ontario will get a new tool to fight bullying and violence -- thanks in large part to a group of Londoners.

The tool is actually a manual for each school to evaluate its own progress in battling bullying and use all the resources in Ontario to tailor its own programs, London anti-violence expert Peter Jaffe said yesterday.

A key to the manual is that it can be used for years, he added.

"Unfortunately, many (anti-bullying) programs are a flash in the pan," Jaffe said at the launch of the Sustainable Strategies for Safe Schools at Glen Cairn elementary school.

"Violence prevention is a process, not an event."

Ontario's principals want to fight bullying but are faced each with an onslaught of DVDS, CDS, documents, plans and programs -- with little backup support or analysis -- to help them.

What they need is an inventory of all the best plans, how to use them, and a way to make sure they're working, Jaffe said.

"No one resource is going to solve the problem across the province," said Linda Crossley-Hauch, a retired Thames Valley district school board principal and one of the strategy's creators.

"You can't take a pat program and apply it everywhere."

The strategy took three years and \$580,000 -- donated by the Trillium Foundation -- to create.

About 1,200 students, parents and staff from 23 schools in four Ontario boards were involved in helping create the strategy, said Jaffe, a Thames Valley trustee and director of London's Centre for Research and Education on Violence against Women and Children.

Several London anti-violence experts and educators led the project.

Organizations representing police, teachers, principals, public health and mental health officials across Ontario all contributed to the strategy.

"We wanted to make sure our resource doesn't end up on the shelf of the principal's office and is never used again," Crossley-Hauch said.

The manual will be distributed to more than 4,000 elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.

