Interschool Visits on Cyberbullying

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Seniors in South High Schools' Facing History course visited fifth-graders at Lakeville School and Saddle Rock School to present lessons they had developed on Digital Citizenship, with a focus on cyberbullying. Joining the South High students at Lakeville were several of Bridget Forie's students in the Outdoor Education Program. In one activity, simulating cyberbullying, South High students read aloud text messages to the elementary students and, with their heads down on their desks and their eyes closed, to not be influenced by their classmates' responses, the elementary students were asked to put their thumbs up if they felt the message was okay, thumbs down if they found the message offensive, and thumbs to the side if they weren't sure. Another exercise involved a "Turn and Talk" activity where students discuss with each other a lesson-related question/topic. South High students introduced a cyberbullying scenario and then asked the fifth-graders to discuss prevention strategies with a partner. The cyberbullying lessons taught by the high school students related to Digital Citizenship taught at the elementary schools, which includes social media etiquette, privacy issues, and strategies to use when evaluating safe and reputable sources on the Internet. In their thank-you notes to the South High students, the elementary students shared these thoughts: "I learned that cyberbullies often don't stop at one instance, and you should keep reporting them until the cyberbullying stops. With this new information on how to deal with the situation, now I know how to stop cyberbullying. I also learned that you should block the cyberbully's e-mail address and cell phone number, and delete him or her from contacts." "I appreciate that you tried to make the presentation fun and enjoyable. I thank you for trying to let the world know what cyberbullying is and how to stop it." "I liked how you guys were so open to taking questions. I appreciate how you took the time to create a presentation and to make it fun with activities such as the head-down game." The interschool lessons were overseen, at Lakeville, by Jean Reader and Leslie Watnik, technology staff developers; and at Saddle Rock by Nicole Alexander, computer teacher/technology staff developer, and Evan Chen, third-grade teacher. South High facilitators were teachers Brian Fadde, Nicole Kinsey, Damon Reader, and Michelle Sorise.