



TODAY, NABOZNY has a full-time job. But he still travels across the country to talk with students about his experiences. "Harassment is harassment, and it should not be tolerated," he says. "It doesn't matter whether somebody's gay or whether they're Jewish or whether they're overweight. Kids do not deserve it, and they deserve to be protected and safe in their schools."

Fighting Back Against Bullies

A new Teaching Tolerance documentary points the way

The Film Is Based on a True Story

Jamie Nabozny carefully planned his every move at school. He had to. The bullying by his classmates in Ashland, Wisconsin, was unrelenting.

The attacks began in middle school. Jamie knew he was gay and had told his family, but hadn't come out to friends and classmates. It didn't matter; his classmates saw him as gay. At first, the bullies called him names. That progressed to tripping and shoving, and then to kicks and punches. They ganged up on him in the restroom. Jamie was once kicked so hard that he had to go to the hospital.

Jamie adapted as best he could. Before the first class bell rang, he was already mapping out his day. Jamie got to school early to miss the rush and took refuge in quiet corners. He used hall passes to avoid crowded class changes. And he looked for out-of-the-way restrooms where he wouldn't be attacked. Only after other students left school would Jamie finally make his way home.

"I spent a lot of time thinking defensively, which is a strange thing to have to do at school," said Jamie, who is now in his mid-30s. "Looking back, I feel like I tried to be numb as much as possible to not feel what was happening."

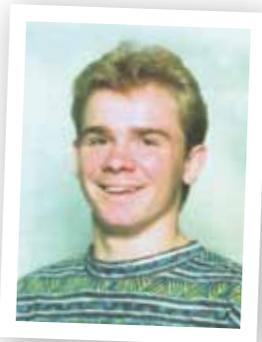
Jamie reported the abuse to teachers and administrators, but they did little to stop the bullies. A middle school administrator told Jamie he should expect to be bullied if he was going to be gay. A high school official asked him what he did to cause the attacks.

Nabozny's story is told in the new Teaching Tolerance film *Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case that Made History*. The documentary shows how Nabozny coura-

geously stood up for his rights. He filed a lawsuit against the district and school officials. His suit led to an important court decision that public school officials had to protect all students from bullies, even those who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT).

Viewer's Guide Offers Advice for School Leaders

The *Bullied* viewer's guide that comes in the film kit includes professional development activities and guidance for school leaders as well as classroom lessons. While most schools and educators will act promptly when faced with bullying based on race, religion or ethnicity, many are less likely to confront harassment based on sexual orientation. The *Bullied* guide provides guidance in a series of answers to the questions educators who use the kit may be asked by their colleagues, members of the community or parents.



The guide addresses these important issues:

- Why is a film on anti-gay bullying necessary?
- What are the risks to students?
- What is at stake for the school?
- Does the ruling depicted in *Bullied* apply to my school?
- What about a teacher's, student's or parent's personal beliefs?
- How can I explain the decision to use *Bullied* to my school community?
- How can I use *Bullied* in staff development?
- How can I assess my school's climate?
- Where do I find resources for effective anti-bullying programs? ♦