School Safety Fears Versus Facts
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Overview
1. Despite our fears, schools are safe.
2. We do not need to design fortress schools.
3. School design should consider ways to foster community and a positive social climate.

Public concern over a recent series of mass shootings:
- Jan 2011 shopping center in Tucson AZ (6)
- Sep 2011 restaurant in Carson City NV (5)
- Jul 2012 movie theater in Aurora CO (12)
- Aug 2012 Sikh temple in Oak Creek WI (7)
- Sept 2012 business in Minneapolis MN (7)
- Dec 2012 school in Newtown CT (28)

Frightening Scenes

The media were quick to assert that mass shootings were increasing.

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Dr. Cornell has studied youth violence for over 25 years and has assisted numerous schools in the development of violence prevention programs. He has authored more than 200 publications in psychology and education, including two recent books: Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence and School Violence: Fears versus Facts.

The Washington Post
Why are mass shootings becoming more common?

Department of Awful Statistics: Are Mass Shootings Really On the Rise?
by Jorge quindi / Jul 26, 2012 2:32 PM EST
They're not, but the alarmist numbers are more likely to get media attention.
School safety fears versus facts

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April 17, 2013

The Sandy Hook shooting was part of a national problem with gun violence, not school violence.

- Approximately 31,000 gun fatalities each year
- Suicide (62%), homicide (35%), & accidental shootings (3%)
- Approximately 85 deaths per day

Source: National Vital Statistics
http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/dataRestriction_inj.html

Chart from James Alan Fox, Northeastern University
http://boston.com/community/blogs/crime_punishment/2013/01/responding_to_mother_jones.html
Where do violent crimes occur in Virginia?

2011 Virginia Murder Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence/Home</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway/Road Way</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lot/ Garage</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., office)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Woods</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store/Restaurant</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/College</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from page 46, Crime in Virginia 2011, Virginia State Police. Data for schools k-12 and colleges are combined.

2011 Virginia Aggravated Assault Offenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence/Home</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway/Road Way</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking Lot/ Garage</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g., hotel, office)</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store/Restaurant</td>
<td>437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/College</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field/Woods</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data from page 46, Crime in Virginia 2011, Virginia State Police. Data for schools k-12 and colleges are combined.

One shooting does not change the fundamental safety of our schools.

How many elementary schools in the U.S.?

- 67,000 public elementary
- 16,000 private elementary
- 83,000 total elementary schools

http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=84

How many homicides occur in U.S. elementary schools?

- 30 homicides 1992-2011
- 26 homicides at Sandy Hook
- 56 total homicides in 24 years

http://www.schoolsafety.us/media-resources/school-associated-violent-deaths
How frequently will a homicide occur at the average school?
• Total 56 homicides in 24 years
• 2.3 homicides per year
• 83,000 schools
• 83,000 ÷ 2.3/year =
• 1 case every 36,000 years

Where do we need police protection?
• Location A -- highest crime rate
• Location B -- medium crime rate
• Location C -- lowest crime rate

Unless we have unlimited police resources, we should place any additional officers in locations with the highest crime rates.

What if the media devotes 95% of its coverage to crime in Location C?
• Location A -- highest crime rate
• Location B -- medium crime rate
• Location C -- lowest crime rate

Media coverage should not compromise an objective assessment of crime rates and security needs.

Our schools are safe

We have high levels of gun violence in the United States, but not high levels of school violence.

School-Associated Violent Deaths 1992-2010

School violence is not increasing.

2013 data from CDC School-Associated Violent Death Study - http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/schoolviolence/savd.html

Source: Indicators of school crime and safety. 2011. Table 2.1. National Crime Victimization Study data reported by National Center for Education Statistics.
School shootings generate increased fear that can lead to over-reactions.

Schools Are Training Second-Graders to Attack Mass Shooters

6 year old pointed finger and said "pow!"

Zero Tolerance Suspensions

Arming our teachers is not that easy

Fear mongering

Zero Tolerance Suspensions

9 year old with toy gun

12 year old doodler

Poem about Sandy Hook, "I understand the killings..."

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny/dailynews/education/new-york-dailynews-students-banned-toy-guns-schools-2012-12-20-
http://www.nydailynews.com/ny/dailynews/education/new-york-dailynews-students-banned-toy-guns-schools-2012-12-20-
http://www.nydailynews.com/ny/dailynews/education/new-york-dailynews-students-banned-toy-guns-schools-2012-12-20-

Arming our teachers is not that easy

Gun group offers training for Utah teachers

http://www.nydailynews.com/ny/dailynews/education/new-york-dailynews-students-banned-toy-guns-schools-2012-12-20-
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Should we put armed guards in school buses?
US school bus driver shot dead, child abducted in Alabama

Should we put armed guards in shopping centers?
2011 Tucson shooting, 6 killed

Should we put armed guards in theaters?
Colorado shooting at ‘Dark Knight’ opening leaves 12 dead

Hudson Falls schools to upgrade security at entrances

For York County schools, security has renewed sense of urgency after Newtown

Schools study more secure building designs

Schools to Improve Front Entrance Security

ROCKINGHAM COUNTY -- Nearly $200,000 will now go toward making Rockingham County's schools secure.
School safety fears versus facts
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Schools rush to make entrances more secure.

Where do homicides occur in U.S. elementary schools? 1992-2011
- 7 (23%) Inside school
- 23 (77%) Outside school
  - 9 Parking lot
  - 6 Playground
  - 8 Other outside areas

http://www.schoolsafety.us/media-resources/school-associated-violent-deaths

How Can We Prevent Violence?

Prevention means “to keep something from happening”

Crisis response is not prevention.
A crisis occurs when prevention has failed.

Prevention must start before the gunman is at your door.
Critics say, “We can’t predict who will be violent, so prevention is not possible.”

However,....

Prevention does not require prediction.

We cannot predict who will have an accident, but safety regulations make safer roads, cars, and drivers.

Prevention does not require prediction.

We cannot predict who will get cancer, but we can identify risk and protective factors that reduce cancer rates dramatically.

3 Tier Model of Prevention

- School newspaper
- Rest room monitoring
- Hallway teasing
- Classroom mischief
- Uneven enforcement
- Marching band initiation
- Gym class humiliation
- Group rivalry

Case example: How schools permit and even promote bullying

Teach students to distinguish snitching from seeking help

Snitching: informing on someone for personal gain
Seeking help: attempting to stop someone from being hurt
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What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated use of one's strength or status for the purpose of intimidating or injuring another person.

A conflict between equals is not bullying.

Forms of Bullying

- Physical: hitting, shoving, grabbing
- Verbal: teasing, name-calling
- Social: spreading rumors, shunning or excluding
- Sexual: inappropriate comments and touching
- Cyber-bullying: use of internet

Where does bullying occur?

- Bullying occurs everywhere.
- Open as well as closed areas.
- Locations vary across schools.
- Supervision of hot spots can reduce bullying.
- Primary and secondary school locations are somewhat different.

Bullied in past month

(At least once per week, N = 11,246)

Source: School Climate Bullying Survey, Fall 2009 Safe Schools/Healthy Students Project of Albemarle/Charlottesville schools. Virginia Youth Violence Project, University of Virginia

Safe Schools/Healthy Students project for Charlottesville/Albemarle n = 23 elem schools, 3558 students in grades 3-4-5
Safe Schools/Healthy Students project for Charlottesville/Albemarle n = 23 middle schools, 3069 students in grades 6-7-8
Safe Schools/Healthy Students project for Charlottesville/Albemarle
n = 6 middle schools, 3669 students in grades 6-7-8; 5 high schools, 3824 students

Safe Schools/Healthy Students project for Charlottesville/Albemarle n = 23 elementary schools with 3558 students in grades 3-4-5; 6 middle schools with 3669 students in grades 6-7-8; 5 high schools with 3824 students in grades 9-10-11-12

Bullying and Teasing are the Broken Windows of School Climate

Without order and care, the community deteriorates

Bullying Linked to SOL Performance

Bullying and teasing reported by 9th grade students and teachers predicted schoolwide SOL passing rates.

- Algebra I
- Earth Science
- World History
- Biology
- Geometry

Findings controlled for the proportion of minority students in the school, student poverty, or school size.

Bullying Linked to Dropout Rates

Schools grouped into high-medium-low terciles based on 9th grade teacher perceptions of bullying and teasing. Teacher and student perceptions correlated .31

Schoolwide Passing Rates for Hi-Med-Low PTB:
Teacher Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>high</th>
<th>medium</th>
<th>low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algebra I</td>
<td>84.6</td>
<td>84.1</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth Sci.</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>89.2</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World H.</td>
<td>85.6</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>80.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>85.8</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools grouped into high-medium-low terciles based on 9th grade teacher perceptions of bullying and teasing. Teacher and student perceptions correlated .31
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Bullying and teasing in 9th grade predicted schoolwide graduation rates 4 years later.

Findings controlled for school size, proportion of minority and poor students in the school, community crime, and SOL passing rates.

Survey of principals
Two contrasting groups
- “Get-tough” strict discipline-oriented
- “Be supportive” prevention-oriented

Source: Skiba & Edl, 2004

One dimension....
Many people intuitively think that being tough and being supportive are opposites on a continuum.

Or two dimensions?

DOI: 10.1007/s11292-013-0109-1

Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce bullying: a systematic and meta-analytic review
Maria M. Ttof - David P. Farrington

44 evaluations
Bullying decreased 20-23%
Victimization decreased 17-20%
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Four types of parenting

Authoritarian
Lo Structure Support Hi

Authoritative
Lo Structure Support Hi

Permissive
Lo Structure Support Hi

Negligent
Lo Structure Support Hi

Four types of school climate?

Authoritarian
Lo Structure Support Hi

Authoritative
Lo Structure Support Hi

Permissive
Lo Structure Support Hi

Negligent
Lo Structure Support Hi

Virginia High School Safety Study
Who participated in the study?
296 of 314 schools (94%)
1. 7,431 ninth grade students
2. 2,353 ninth grade teachers
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Virginia High School Safety Study

School climate factors
1. Structure
   - Rules are strictly enforced, but fair
2. Support
   - Teachers treat me with respect, willing to seek help from them.

The school rules are fair.

Florida High Schools

How are structure and support related to student bullying and victimization?

Virginia High Schools

Negligent

Authoritarian

Authoritative

Permissive

Bullying Climate Scale

- Stable factor structure
- Works for males and females, grades 6-12, white and minority students
- Teacher and student versions
Victimization
This year in school have any of the following happened to you personally in the school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>True</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Damage to personal property worth more than $10.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of personal property worth more than $10.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was physically attacked and had to see a doctor</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was physically attacked, but not serious enough to see a doctor.</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received obscene remarks or gestures from a student.</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was threatened in remarks by a student.</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had a weapon pulled on me.</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

99 schools with least structure and support had bullying at the 66th percentile

45 schools with low structure and high support had bullying at the 51st percentile

41 schools with high structure and low support had bullying at the 48th percentile

104 authoritative schools (high structure and high support) had bullying at the 27th percentile

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Results using TEACHER perceptions were consistent with STUDENT perceptions.

Similar results for a broader measure of student victimization (e.g., theft, assault, threats)

Schools with least structure and support have the highest rates of bullying and student victimization.

Virginia High School Safety Study

Schools do not have to choose between “get tough” and “be supportive” policies, but should strive for both. However, rules must be enforced in a fair and consistent manner that respects and supports students.

Schools with high structure and high support:
- Lower bullying and teasing
- Teachers report less mistreatment by students
- Lower schoolwide suspension rates

Schools with high structure and high support:

Findings are consistent across schools regardless of:
- School size
- Student poverty %
- Minority students %
- Urbanicity
Who is being bullied?
Help us stop bullying at this school.

Bullying is defined as the use of one's strength or popularity to injure, threaten, or embarrass another person. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or social. Physical bullying is when a student hits, kicks, grabs, or shoves you on purpose. Verbal bullying is when a student threatens or teases you in a hurtful way. Social bullying is when a student tries to keep others from being your friend or from letting you join in what they are doing. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength argue or fight.

Based on this definition of bullying, write the names of any students who are the victims of bullying. You may write the name of any student at your school whom you know has been bullied at school during the past month.

___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________
___________________________________

The schools ain’t what they used to be and never was. Will Rogers

http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu