School Climate, Bullying, and Threats of Violence in Virginia Schools

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.
Curry School of Education
University of Virginia
434-924-8929
Email: youthvio@virginia.edu
Website: youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu

Topics

1. Center for Public Integrity Report
2. School Climate and Bullying
3. Threat Assessment in Virginia

Report by The Center for Public Integrity

“Virginia Tops Nation in Sending Students to Cops”

“Virginia schools in a single year referred students to law enforcement agencies at a rate nearly three times the national rate.

Virginia’s referral rate: about 16 for every 1,000 students, compared to a national rate of six referrals for every 1,000 students.”

Virginia Tops Nation in Sending Students to Cops

Case examples in which young students arrested for seemingly minor misbehavior.
- 4 year old handcuffed and arrested
- 11 year old with autism charged with felony assault on officer

Some counties had more criminal complaints for students than New York City, which has 16x as many students.
Virginia Tops Nation in Sending Students to Cops

Article raises some important issues about the role of law enforcement in schools.

However, the #1 ranking does not tell the whole story.

Incidents reported to law enforcement

- Assault and battery that results in bodily injury or sexual assault
- Stalking
- Conduct involving alcohol, marijuana, a controlled substance, imitation controlled substance, or an anabolic steroid, including the theft or attempted theft of student prescription medications;
- Threats against school personnel
- Illegal carrying of a firearm
- Illegal conduct involving firebombs, explosive materials or devices, or hoax explosive devices, explosive or incendiary devices, chemical bombs,
- Threats or false threats to bomb

Summarized from VA Code § 22.1-279.3:1.

Incidents reported to law enforcement

D. ..... Nothing in this section shall require delinquency charges to be filed or prevent schools from dealing with school-based offenses through graduated sanctions or educational programming before a delinquency charge is filed with the juvenile court.

Excerpt from VA Code § 22.1-279.3:1. D

Virginia’s Juvenile Arrest Rate Below National Average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Juvenile Arrest Rates per 100,000 juveniles</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WI Virginia</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA California</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Virginia</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NC North Carolina</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TX Texas</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Average</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FL Florida</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MD Maryland</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN Tennessee</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Virginia</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports for 2013 Arrest Tables 38 and 69

Virginia’s Juvenile Incarceration Rate Near National Average

Detention/Correction Rates per 100,000 juveniles in 2013

- AL Alabama
- CA California
- CO Colorado
- FL Florida
- GA Georgia
- IL Illinois
- IN Indiana
- IA Iowa
- KS Kansas
- KY Kentucky
- LA Louisiana
- ME Maine
- MI Michigan
- MN Minnesota
- MS Mississippi
- MO Missouri
- MT Montana
- NE Nebraska
- NV Nevada
- NH New Hampshire
- NJ New Jersey
- NM New Mexico
- NY New York
- NC North Carolina
- ND North Dakota
- OH Ohio
- OK Oklahoma
- OR Oregon
- PA Pennsylvania
- RI Rhode Island
- SC South Carolina
- SD South Dakota
- TN Tennessee
- TX Texas
- UT Utah
- VA Virginia
- WI Wisconsin
- WY Wyoming
School Climate, Bullying and Threats of Violence in Virginia Schools

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

August 4, 2015

Virginia’s Suspension Rates Near National Average
(approximately 28th)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Average</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Carolina</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Virginia</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2011-12 data from USDOE Civil Rights Data Collection, reported by Losen et al., 2015, "Are We Closing the School Discipline Gap?"

Virginia’s On-Time High School Graduation Rates Above National Average
(ranked 16th)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Average</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Virginia</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N Carolina</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Virginia’s high rate of police referrals is cause for concern, but does not tell the whole story.

- Arrests - below average
- Incarceration – near average
- Suspension – near average
- Graduation – above average

Next Steps

- Examine the reporting law.
- Review student arrest practices.
- Implement strategies that improve student behavior.

School Climate Survey
Spring 2015

- 415 schools
- 56,508 students in grades 7 or 8
- 8,757 teachers and staff
Selected School Climate Items
56,508 Students in Grades 7 or 8

- I expect to graduate from high school... 97%
- I feel safe in this school. 90%
- If another student brought a gun to school, I would tell one of the teachers or staff at school. 74%
- There are adults at this school I could talk with if I had a personal problem. 77%
- Most teachers and other adults at this school want all students to do well. 75%
- The school rules are fair. 65%
- I feel like I belong at this school. 84%
- I like this school. 80%

Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying
56,508 Students in Grades 7 or 8

- Students in this school are teased or put down because of their race or ethnicity. 35%
- Students in this school are teased or put down because of their sexual orientation. 35%
- There is a lot of teasing about sexual topics at this school. 51%
- Students in this school are teased about their clothing or physical appearance. 68%
- Bullying is a problem at this school. 46%

Students Are Treated Fairly Regardless of Race or Ethnicity.

- White: 85%
- Black: 72%
- Hispanic: 76%
- Asian: 81%
- Amer Indian/Alaskan: 77%
- Hawaiian/Pacific: 74%
- 2 or more: 75%

Students in this School Are Teased or Put Down Because of their Race or Ethnicity.

- White: 30%
- Black: 40%
- Hispanic: 40%
- Asian: 40%
- Amer Indian/Alaskan: 41%
- Hawaiian/Pacific: 40%
- 2 or more: 40%
School Climate, Bullying and Threats of Violence in Virginia Schools
Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

2016 SURVEY
Feb 1 – April 1
- 9th thru 12th grades
- 324 high schools
- Students, teachers, and staff

Threat Assessment
1. Virginia Threat Assessment Law
2. Threat Case Data
3. Upcoming Survey
School Climate, Bullying and Threats of Violence in Virginia Schools
Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.
August 4, 2015

Student Threat Assessment as a Safe and Supportive Prevention Strategy

4-year project (2015-2018)

Report Available

Virginia Student Threat Assessment Project

1. Statewide inventory of practices
2. Identification of best practices
3. Assessment of outcomes by race
4. Technical assistance/training
5. Randomized control trial on training effectiveness

Types of Threats (%)

- Kill: 20%
- Unspecified: 20%
- Hit, beat: 18%
- Stab, cut: 13%
- Shoot: 11%
- Hit, weapon: 10%
- Bomb: 6%
- Sexual: 1%
- Other: 14%

Percentages for 1,470 threat cases from 810 schools. One case can involve more than one type of threat.

Do not copy without permission
434-924-8929
School Climate, Bullying and Threats of Violence in Virginia Schools

Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

August 4, 2015

Do not copy without permission
434-924-8929

Virginia Student Threat Assessment Project

- In our initial year, preliminary analyses show positive results for statewide implementation of student threat assessment.
- Schools are making differentiated assessments, recognizing that most cases are not serious.
- Most students are able to return to school, with few arrests or expulsions.
- Similar outcomes for Black, Hispanic, and White students.
Next Steps

1. 2014-15 Safety Audit Survey
2. Training needs phone survey
3. Training offered in 2016-17