Bullying and School Climate

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Main Points

1. Formal programs alone are not sufficient.
2. Structure and support are key elements of a positive school climate.
3. A positive school climate is linked to multiple benefits:
   - Lower bullying
   - Less teacher victimization
   - Higher academic performance

Be the Hero

You do not have to be a super-hero to stop bullying.
Nor should schools just rely on a super program.

Created by students at Albemarle High School
http://youtu.be/6LJLMRtllAo

Do bullying prevention programs work?

- 44 studies show wide range of effects:
  - Some negative
  - Most positive
- Average reduction about 20%
Formal programs alone are not enough.

Schools need a school climate that encourages appropriate student behavior.

Survey of principals

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

Source: Skiba & Edl, 2004

Classic study of parents

Two contrasting groups
- “Authoritarian” strict discipline-oriented
- “Permissive” lacking in discipline

Source: Baumrind, 1966

One dimension....

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

Structure                   Support
“Demanding”                 “Responsive”
“Strict”                    “Warm”
“Tough”

Or two dimensions?

Four types of parenting

Authoritarian    Authoritative

Authoritative    Permissive

Negligent        Permissive
Four types of school climate

- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Negligent
- Permissive

Virginia High School Safety Study

Conducted by the Curry School of Education
In collaboration with:
- Virginia Department of Education
- Department of Criminal Justice Services and Center for School Safety
Funded by U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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

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

School Rules

| Everyone knows the school rules for student conduct. | SA | D | A | SA |
| The school rules are fair. | SA | D | A | SA |
| The punishment for breaking school rules is the same no matter who you are. | SA | D | A | SA |
| The school rules are strictly enforced. | SA | D | A | SA |
| If a school rule is broken, students know what kind of punishment will follow. | SA | D | A | SA |
| We have a strict dress code at school. | SA | D | A | SA |
| If a student breaks the rules at this school, he or she will be punished. | SA | D | A | SA |

Support

| Really care about all students. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Acknowledge and pay attention to students. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Want all students to do their best. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Listen to what students have to say. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Believe that every student can be a success. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Treat all students fairly. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Support and treat students with respect. | SA | D | A | SA |
| Feel a responsibility to improve the school. | SA | D | A | SA |

Source: Experience of Rules (NCES, 2005) School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey

Source: Learning/Working Environment scale (Austin & Duerr, 2005)
Bullying and School Climate
Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

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Virginia High Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Bullying</th>
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<tr>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>Negligent 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Authoritarian 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Lo</td>
<td>Permissive 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Hi</td>
<td>Authoritative 104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Results using TEACHER perceptions were consistent with STUDENT perceptions.

Schools with high structure and high support:

- Lower bullying and teasing
- Teachers report less mistreatment by students
- Lower schoolwide suspension rates


Teacher Safety and Authoritative School Climate in High Schools

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University of Virginia
SHINO FAN
University of Maine

Most research on school climate focuses on student well-being, with less attention paid to the safety of school staff. The current study examined the relationship between an authoritative school climate (characterized by high levels of student support and disciplinary structure) and both teacher reports of victimization and school records of threats against staff. Regression analyses in a statewide sample of 240 high schools showed that structure (as measured by student and teacher perceptions) and support were each uniquely associated with fewer teacher reports of victimization. Teacher reports of mistreatment and school discipline records were also associated with the teacher victimization rate, controlling for demographic and school-level covariates. Findings suggest that policies aimed at improving the workplace for teachers can reduce bullying, harassment, and mistreatment of school staff.


The Relationship of School Structure and Support to Suspension Rates for Black and White High School Students

ANE GREGORY
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
DENEY CORNELL
University of Virginia
SHINO FAN
University of Virginia

This study examined the relationship between structure and support in the high school climate and suspension rates in a statewide sample of 240 schools. School climate surveys completed by 10th grade students measured characteristics of authoritative schools, defined as high-schoolers reporting high levels of discipline and support. Multivariate analyses showed that schools low on characteristics of an authoritative school had the highest suspension rates for black and white students after statistically controlling for school demographics. Furthermore, schools low on both structure and support had the largest racial discipline gap. These findings highlight the characteristics of weak settings that may not meet the developmental needs of adolescents and may contribute to disproportionate disciplinary actions for black students.
Schools with high structure and high support:

Findings are consistent across schools regardless of:
- School size
- Student poverty %
- Minority students %
- Urbanicity

School Climate Matters

1. The prevalence of bullying and teasing in a school is related to school academic performance.
2. School climate is as powerful a predictor as the demographics of the school.
3. Unlike demographics, school climate can be changed.

Bullying And Teasing Climate Scale

Bullying is a problem at this school.
Students here often get teased about their clothing or physical appearance.
Students here often get put down because of their race or ethnicity.
There is a lot of teasing about sexual topics at this school.

- Stable factor structure
- Reliable measure for males and females, grades 6-12, white and minority students
- Teacher and student versions

Virginia High School Safety Study Links Bullying to Test 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.
Virginia High School Safety Study Links Bullying to Dropout Rates

Perceived Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Predicts High School Dropout Rates

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Arizona State University

Frankie Hwang
University of Virginia

Xiaoyi Pan
University of Minnesota

This prospective study of 72 Virginia public high schools found that the prevalence of teasing and bullying (PTB) in 9th grade student and teacher perceptions predicted dropout rates for 4 subsequent years. The results appear to add to the literature demonstrating the detrimental effects of high levels of perceived teasing and bullying on student academic outcomes in high school, particularly for females, minority, lower SES students, and students with learning disabilities. The findings are consistent with the "Broken Windows" theory that high rates of teasing and bullying in high school are associated with lower graduation rates. Students in schools with higher PTB are more likely to be expelled, drop out of school, and engage in delinquent behavior.

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

Bullying and Teasing in 9th grade predicted schoolwide graduation rates 4 years later.

High Teasing/Bullying Linked to Higher Dropouts in both High and Low Poverty Schools

Bullying and Teasing are the Broken Windows of School Climate

Without order and care, the community deteriorates
Suspension Practices

Suspension is a practice that has more negative than positive effects on students:

- Fall behind in their classes
- Feel alienated and rejected
- Continue to misbehave and be suspended
- Drop out of school
- Disproportionate effects on minority students
- Juvenile court involvement

http://www.justicecenter.csg.org/resources/juveniles

School Climate Model

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<th>School Context</th>
<th>Climate Efforts</th>
<th>Climate Outcomes</th>
<th>Student Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community crime level</td>
<td>Strictness of discipline</td>
<td>Student experiences of safety</td>
<td>Decreased suspension and expulsion rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student poverty</td>
<td>Fairness of discipline</td>
<td>Teacher-staff experiences of safety</td>
<td>Increased academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial composition</td>
<td>Security practices (e.g., cameras, law enforcement)</td>
<td>Fewer school discipline infractions</td>
<td>Increased graduation rates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School size</td>
<td>Teacher-staff interactions with students</td>
<td>Increased attendance</td>
<td>Greater equity across student groups on all above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanicity</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased suspension and expulsion rates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School Context
- School Climate
- Climate Outcomes
- Student Benefits

School Context
- Impact of community crime level
- Student poverty
- Racial composition
- School size
- Urbanicity

Factors that school authorities will expect to see recognized in an assessment of their school.

Suspension Practices

http://www.justicecenter.csg.org/resources/juveniles

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

- All public schools with grades 7-12
- Biennial school climate survey
- Random or whole-grade samples

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

- Disciplinary structure
- Student support
- Student engagement
- Bullying and other aggression

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

- 419 of 429 schools (98%)
- 42,480 students (grades 7-8)
- 9,134 teachers