Key Characteristics of a Safe and Welcoming School Climate

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Main Points

1. Our schools are safe.
2. Zero tolerance is not effective.
3. Good schools are like good parents – demanding, but supportive.
4. An authoritative school has less bullying, less aggression toward teachers, and fewer suspensions.

Fear-based Reactions to Shootings

- Increased security
- Alarm systems
- Shooter drills
- Guns for students
- Guns for faculty
- Zero tolerance

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Dr. Cornell has studied youth violence for nearly 30 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 books: Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence and School Violence: Fears versus Facts.

Homicides At School vs Outside of School

Ages 5-18

Sources: CDC National Center for Health Statistics and School Associated Violent Death Surveillance Study (All annual totals are approximate, using the school year for school homicides and the calendar year for non-school data.)
The Sandy Hook shooting was part of a national problem with **gun violence**, not **school** violence.


### 300 Shootings Every Day
- 31,000 fatal shootings
- 78,000 nonfatal shootings
- \(109,000 \div 365 = 298.6\) average

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

### 85 Gun Deaths Every Day
- 31,000 gun fatalities each year
- Suicides (62%)
- Homicides (35%)
- Accidents (3%)

### Analysis of School Shootings

- 44 school shootings in 14 months
- 127,167 est. total shootings in 14 months
- .000346 % of shootings in schools
- 1 of every 2890 shootings in schools

Source: FBI National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)
Should we put armed guards in shopping centers?

2011 Tucson shooting, 6 killed

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.

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 21 years

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

How frequently will a homicide occur at the average elementary school?

- Total 56 homicides in 21 years
- $56 \div 21 = 2.67$ homicides per year
- 83,000 elementary schools
- $83,000 \div 2.67 \text{/year} =$
- 1 case every 31,000 years
School shootings generate increased fear that can lead to over-reactions.

Extra security in Hillsborough schools would cost $4 million
School security measures could cost millions locally
Additional Florida School Security Could Cost $100 Million

School security wish list would cost Marion County $160M
Armed guards in every Minn. school would cost $130 million
NRA proposal would cost schools about $150 million.

Every Per Pupil dollar spent for Security is a Per Pupil dollar NOT spent for Instruction.

Georgia District Makes School Security No. 1 Priority

Georgia school shooting: Antoinette Tuff hailed as hero

The Expansion of Zero Tolerance

From No Guns to
• No Toy Guns
• No Nail clippers
• No Plastic utensils
• No Finger-pointing
• No Jokes
• No Drawings
• No Rubber band shooting
No Accidental violations

The Columbine Effect

6 year old pointed finger and said “pow!”

http://www.sott.net/article/255553-6-year-old-suspended-for-pretend-gunshot

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Zero Tolerance Suspensions

9 year old with toy gun 12 year old doodler Poem about Sandy Hook, “I understand the killings...”


Zero Tolerance

A policy that mandates a severe punishment that is applied to all violations regardless of the circumstances.

From APA Zero Tolerance Task Force Report, 2006

Zero tolerance is not effective. Suspension associated with poorer outcomes for students.

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
• Juvenile court involvement

The school-to-prison pipeline

Boy who held pencil like gun suspended

School has “zero tolerance” weapons policy
Updated: Thursday, 03 May 2011, 2:15 PM EDT

Francisco - Monday, 03 May 2011, 1:25 PM EDT

Anna McMann
BUFFALO, N.Y. (WIVB) - A fourth-grader suspended a second grader for putting a pencil at another student and making gun noises.

Seven-year-old Christopher Marshall says he was playing with another student in class Friday, when the teacher of Clinton Elementary asked them to stop playing pencils at each other.

"When I asked him about it, he said, 'Well I was being a Marine and the other guy was being a bad guy,'” said Paul Marshall, the boy’s father. “It’s as simple as that.”
"African-American students without disabilities are more than three times as likely as their white peers without disabilities to be expelled or suspended."

"The increasing use of disciplinary sanctions such as in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or referrals to law enforcement authorities creates the potential for significant, negative educational and long-term outcomes, and can contribute to what has been termed the 'school to prison pipeline.'"

Survey of principals

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

Source: Skiba & Ed, 2004

Disparate Discipline Rates

Source: US DOE Office for Civil Rights
http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/crdc-2012-data-summary.pdf

What kinds of school discipline practices are effective?

Source: Skiba & Ed, 2004
**Classic study of parents**

Two contrasting groups
- "Authoritarian" strict discipline-oriented
- "Permissive" lacking in discipline

Source: Baumrind, 1966

**Four types of parenting**

- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Negligent
- Permissive

**Virginia Secondary School Climate Study**

- Schools – 423 (98.4%)
- Teachers – 9,134 (79%)
- Students – 43,805 (84.8%)
Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree/ Strongly Agreed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying is a problem at this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students here often get teased about their clothing or physical appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students here often get put down because of their race or ethnicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of teasing about sexual topics at this school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students here get teased or put down about their sexual orientation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

How much teasing and bullying do we observe in schools with different levels of structure and support?

IV - 4 groups of schools
DV - School percentile in Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying
Prior study of 9th grade

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

Schools grouped into high-medium-low terciles based on 9th grade student perceptions of bullying and teasing. Passing rates correlate .20 to .31 with PBT.

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

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

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 Tearing and Bullying Predicts High School Dropout Rates

- 9th grade student and teacher perceptions of the prevalence of bullying and teasing
- Cumulative dropout rate over 4 years
- Controlled for school demographics and SOL test performance
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.

Bullying and Teasing are the Broken Windows of School Climate

Without order and care, the community deteriorates.

Student Aggression Reported by Teachers

Student Aggression Toward Teachers across 4 Types of School Climate

Authoritative Schools Have Fewer Aggressive Behavior Infractions
I. Positive school climate and prevention

II. High expectations for discipline

III. Equity and improvement

Schools with high structure and high support:

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

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

In collaboration:

- Virginia Department of Education
- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and Center for School Safety

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Be the Hero

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

Students do not need a super-hero to stop bullying. They need a positive school climate.