Good schools are like good parents
Dewey Cornell, Ph.D.

Good Schools Are Like Good Parents: Demanding, But Supportive
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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 100 publications in psychology and education, including two recent books: Guidelines for Responding to Student Threats of Violence and School Violence: Fears versus Facts.

Handouts available:
http://curry.virginia.edu/yvp
Click on Presentations

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

Source: Skiba & Edi, 2004

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

Structure                                Support
“Demanding”                           “Responsive”
“Strict”                               “Warm”
“Tough”
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Or two dimensions?

Four types of parenting

Authoritarian

Authoritative

Negligent

Permissive

Four types of school climate?

Authoritarian

Authoritative

Negligent

Permissive

Virginia High School
Safety Study

Conducted by a research team at the Curry School of Education (Cornell, Gregory, Fan, & Sheras)
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

Virginia High School
Safety Study

School climate was measured by surveying 9th grade students and teachers.

How was the survey carried out?

Written and video instructions for
• Principals
• Teachers
• Students

Adrianna Sgarlata, Miss Virginia 2006
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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 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.

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

Virginia High Schools

Authoritarian
   High
41

Authoritative
   High
104

Negligent
   Low
99

Permissive
   Low
45

Adults in this school want all students to do their best.
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Bullying Climate Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree/ Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bullying is a problem at this school.</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students here often get teased about their clothing or physical appearance.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students here often get put down because of their race or ethnicity.</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a lot of teasing about sexual topics at this school.</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Victimization

<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>

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

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.
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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.

Authoritative Schools
Student perceptions of Disciplinary Structure

Thinking about your school over the last 6 months, would you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following...

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

Authoritative Schools
Student perceptions of a supportive climate

How much do you agree that adults in this school...

1. Really care about all students.
2. Acknowledge and pay attention to students.
3. Want all students to do their best.
4. Listen to what students have to say.
5. Believe that every student can be a success.
6. Treat all students fairly.
7. Support and treat students with respect.
8. Feel a responsibility to improve the school.

Teacher Victimization

What school characteristics are linked to lower levels of teacher victimization?

After controlling for:
- School size
- Student poverty %
- Minority students %
- Urbanicity

Lower victimization in schools with:
- Higher structure
- Higher support

Teacher Victimization

This year have any of the following happened to you personally in the school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>% of teachers (2,870)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had a weapon pulled on me</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was physically attacked and had to see a doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was physically attacked, but not seriously enough to see a doctor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage to personal property worth more than $10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theft of personal property worth more than $10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was threatened in remarks by a student</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received obscene remarks or gestures from a student</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was spoken to in a rude or disrespectful manner by a student</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher Victimization**

Schools in which teachers are strict but fair, as well as supportive, have less teacher victimization.

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