Virginia School Climate Survey: Findings on the Prevention of Bullying

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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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Our Research Team

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Anna Heilbrun, Kathan Shukla, Peter Lovegrove, Juliette Berg

What kinds of school discipline practices are effective?

Survey of principals

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

Source: Skiba & Edl, 2004

The survey of school principals reminded us of research on parents.
**Classic study of parents**

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

Source: Baumrind, 1966

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**Or two dimensions?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Demanding&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Responsive&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Strict&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Warm&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Four types of parenting**

- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Negligent
- Permissive

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**Children of Authoritative Parents**

- Well-behaved, fewer problems
- Higher self-esteem
- Better relationships with peers
- Higher school achievement
Four types of school climate?

- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Negligent
- Permissive

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

**Studied 7th and 8th grade students (ages 12-13) and their teachers**

**Virginia Secondary School Climate Study**

- Schools - 423 (98.4%)
- Teachers - 9,134 (79%)
- Students - 43,805 (84.8%)

**Support - Care and Respect**

- Most teachers and other adults of this school care about all students' success
- Most teachers and other adults of this school care about all students' happiness
- Most teachers and other adults of this school care about all students' growth
- Few adults at this school understand what students are feeling
- I feel that if I was a teacher who someone bothering me, the teachers would do something to help
- I feel that there are too few adults at this school who really care about students or their schoolwork

**Virginia Middle Schools**

- Authoritarian 35
- Authoritative 176
- Negligent 176
- Permissive 36
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Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agree/Strongly Agree</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

Multi-level multivariate analysis of peer victimization and school climate

Prevalence of Teasing & Bullying

Student Aggression Reported by Teachers

A student said mean or insulting things to me.
A student stole my personal property.
A student threatened to hurt me.
A student physically attacked, pushed, or hit me.
A student threatened me with a weapon.

Average for 9,134 7th and 8th grade teachers in 387 schools

Percentage reporting at least one time
Bullying and Teasing are the Broken Windows of School Climate

Without order and care, the community deteriorates

Prior study of 9th grade

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

Schoolwide Passing Rates for Hi-Med-Low PTB:
Teacher Reports
Virginia High School Safety Study Links Bullying to 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.

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

Virginia Secondary School Climate Study

Middle school reports released August 2013
https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcss/audit/student/reports/

High school reports coming soon!
https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/vcscs/audit/student/

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

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