

## Bullying and School Climate

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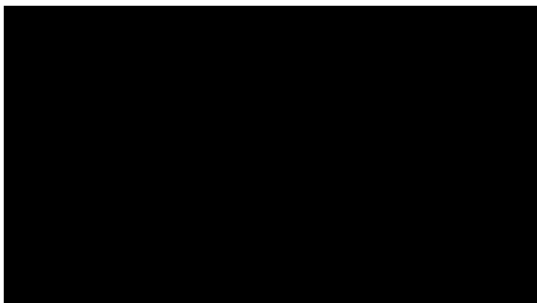
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## Main Points

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



Created by students at Albemarle High School  
<http://youtu.be/6ULMRTlIAo>

You do not have to be a  
super-hero to stop bullying.

Nor should schools just rely  
on a super program.



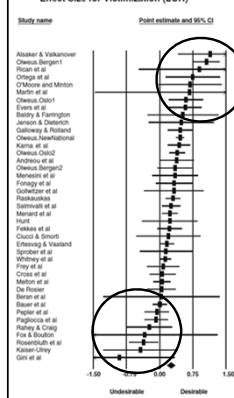
## Do bullying prevention programs work?



Q: Do you have any data that supports your program?

A: We are currently working on an efficiency study for the near future. So far, most of our data is anecdotal.

Effect Size for Victimization (LOR)



J Exp Criminal (2011) 7:27-36  
DOI 10.1007/s11292-010-9109-1

Effectiveness of school-based programs to reduce  
bullying: a systematic and meta-analytic review  
Maria M. Tiofi · David P. Farrington

- 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

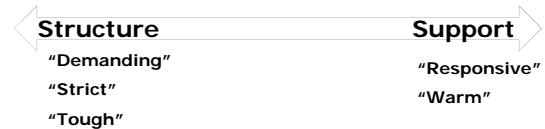
- "Authoritarian" strict discipline-oriented
- "Permissive" lacking in discipline



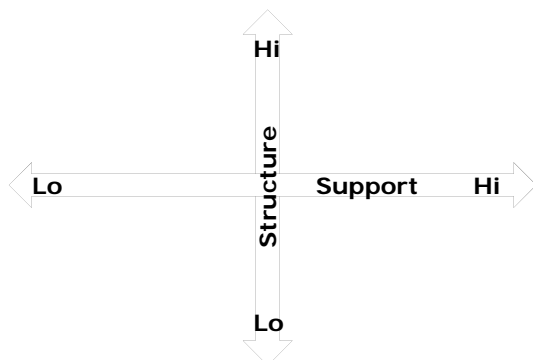
Source: Baumrind, 1966

## One dimension....

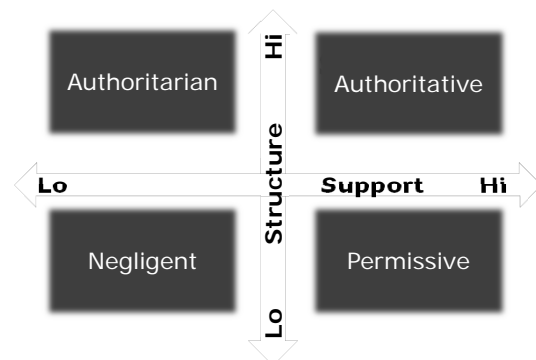
Many people intuitively think that  
being tough and being supportive are  
opposites on a continuum.



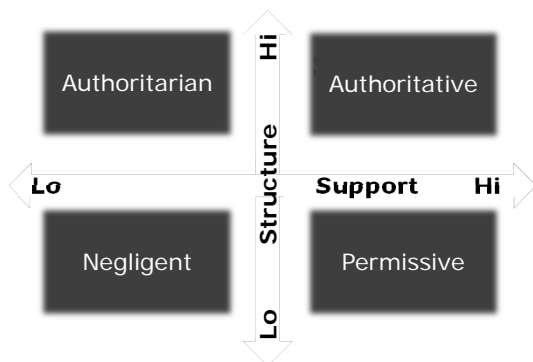
## Or two dimensions?



## Four types of parenting



## Four types of school climate



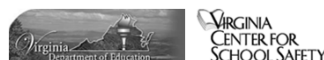
## Virginia High School Safety Study

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



## 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



## Virginia High School Safety Study

### School climate factors

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

### School Rules

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

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

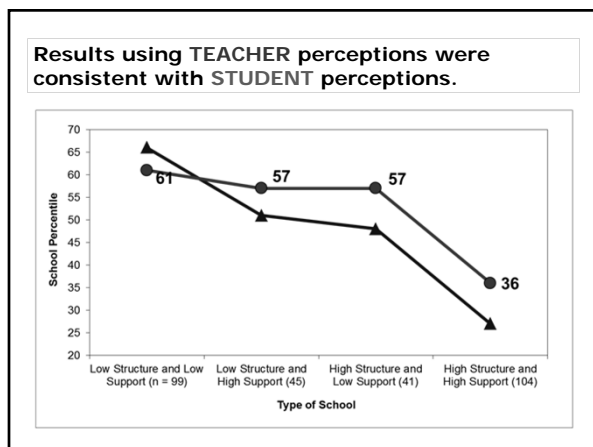
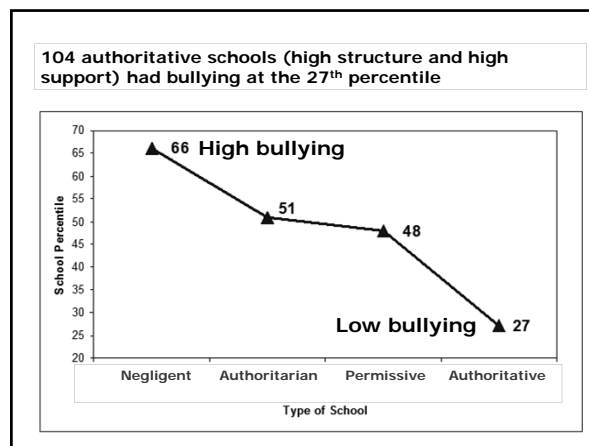
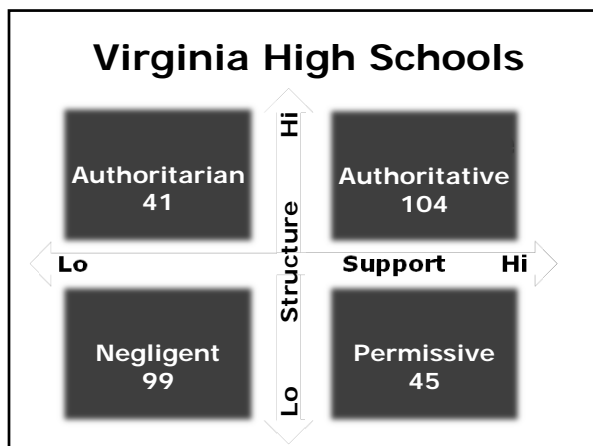
Source: Experience of Rules (NCES, 2005) School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey

### Support

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

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

Source: Learning/Working Environment scale (Austin & Duerr, 2005)



### Teacher Safety and Authoritative School Climate in High Schools

ANNE GREGORY  
*Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*  
 DEWEY CORNELL  
*University of Virginia*  
 XITAO FAN  
*University of Miami*

Most research on school climate focuses on student well-being, with less attention on the safety of school faculty. 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 280 high schools showed that structure (as measured by student- and teacher-reported clarity of school rules) and support (as measured by teacher-reported help seeking) were associated with less teacher victimization, after controlling for school and neighborhood demographics. Support, but not structure, was a consistent predictor of school records of threats against faculty. These findings offer implications for improving the workplace for teachers and staff.

*American Journal of Education, 2012*

American Educational Research Journal  
August 2011, Vol. 48, No. 4, pp. 504-514  
DOI: 10.3102/0002831211398531  
© 2011 AERA. http://aerj.aera.net

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

Anne Gregory  
*Rutgers University*  
 Dewey Cornell  
 Xitao 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 199 schools. School climate surveys completed by 5,035 ninth grade students measured characteristics of authoritative schools, defined as highly supportive, yet highly structured with academic and behavioral expectations. Multivariate analyses showed that schools low on characteristics of an authoritative school had the highest schoolwide 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 gaps. These findings highlight the characteristics of risky settings that may not meet the developmental needs of adolescents and may contribute to disproportionate disciplinary outcomes for Black students.

- ### Schools with high structure and high support:
- Lower bullying and teasing
  - Teachers report less mistreatment by students
  - Lower schoolwide suspension rates

## 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

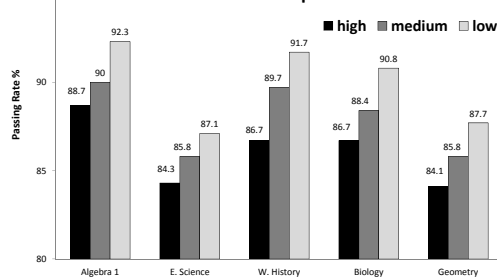
### Virginia High School Safety Study Links Bullying to Test Performance

Bullying and teasing reported by 9<sup>th</sup> grade students and teachers predicted schoolwide SOL passing rates.

- Algebra I
- Earth Science
- World history
- Biology
- Geometry

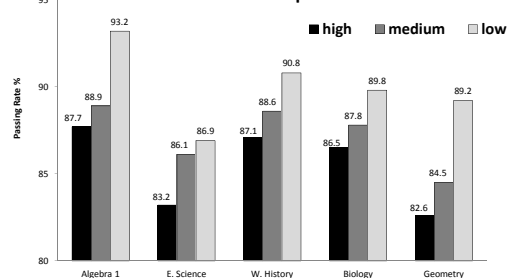
Findings controlled for the proportion of minority students in the school, student poverty, or school size.

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



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

## Virginia High School Safety Study Links Bullying to Dropout Rates

*Journal of Educational Psychology*

© 2012 American Psychological Association  
0022-0665/12/\$12.00 DOI: 10.1037/a0028063

### Perceived Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Predicts High School Dropout Rates

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**Xitao Fan**  
University of Macau

This prospective study of 276 Virginia public high schools found that the prevalence of teasing and bullying (PTB) as perceived by both 9th-grade students and teachers was predictive of dropout rates for this cohort 4 years later. Negative binomial regression indicated that one standard deviation increases in student- and teacher-reported PTB were associated with 16.5% and 10.8% increases in the number of dropouts, respectively, after controlling for the effects of other predictors, including school size, student body poverty and minority composition, community crime rates, and performance on standardized achievement testing. The predictive values of student and teacher perceptions of PTB were comparable in magnitude to the predictive values for other commonly recognized correlates of dropout rates. These results provide new evidence that the prevalence of peer victimization in high school is an important factor in high school academic performance.

### Perceived Prevalence of Teasing and Bullying Predicts High School Dropout Rates

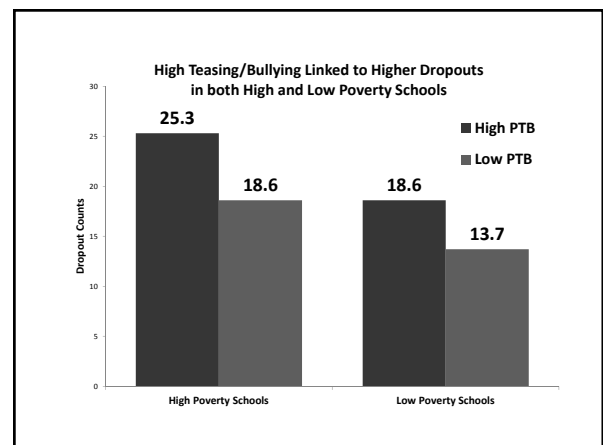
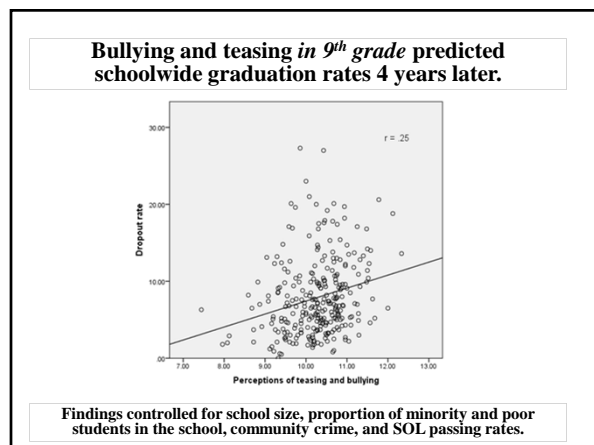
**Dewey Cornell**  
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University of Virginia

**Anne Gregory**  
Rutgers University

**Xitao Fan**  
University of Macau

- 9<sup>th</sup> 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 are the Broken Windows of School Climate

### BROKEN WINDOW THEORY

**Without order and care, the community deteriorates**

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### Youth

#### School Discipline Consensus Project

Millions of public school students are suspended or expelled each year, particularly youth of color and those with special needs. When students are suspended or expelled, they are more likely to have poor academic outcomes and to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

[Learn More](#)

## *Suspension Practices*

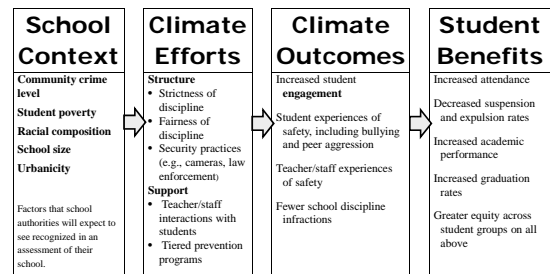
**Suspension is a practice that has more negative than positive effects on students:**

- 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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**Virginia Secondary School  
Climate Study**

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



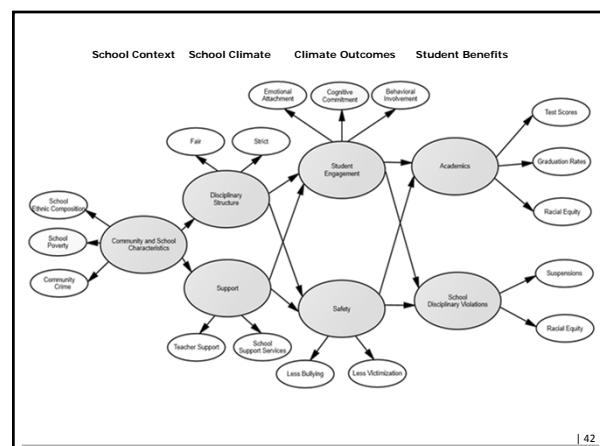
**Virginia Secondary School  
Climate Study**

- 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



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