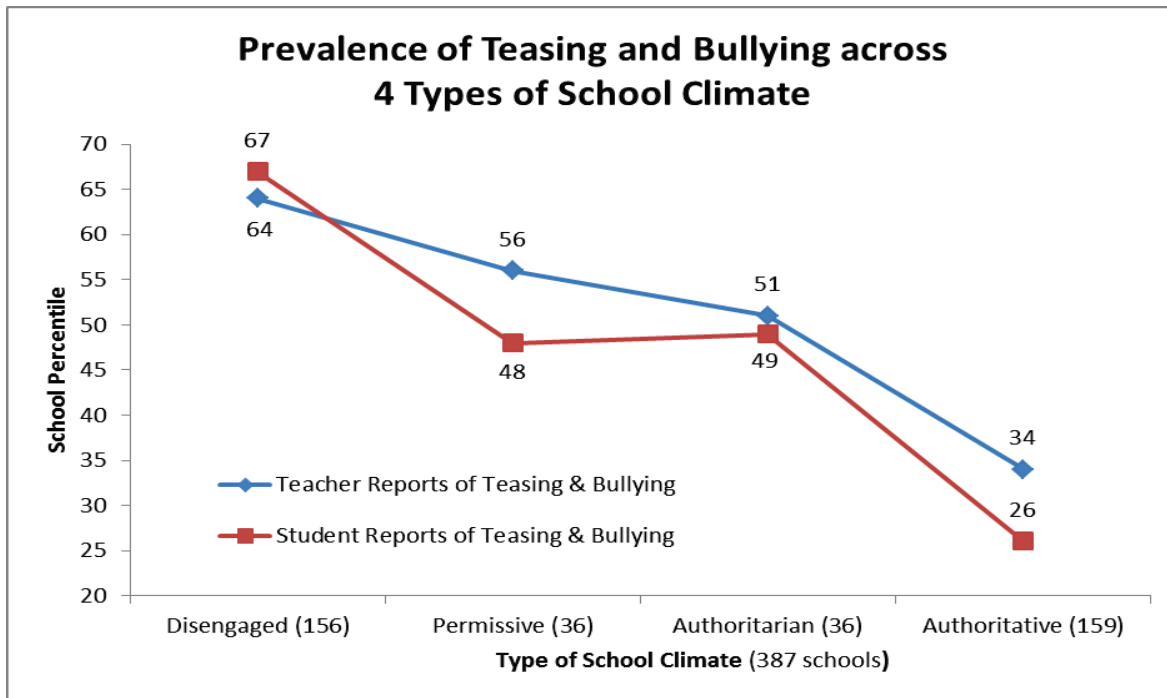


Authoritative Schools Have Less Teasing and Bullying

Our research found that authoritative schools have lower levels of teasing and bullying than authoritarian, permissive, or disengaged schools. Schools scoring above the state median for structure and support were classified as *authoritative*, and these were compared to schools with high structure but low support (*authoritarian*), high support but low structure (*permissive*), or low structure and low support (*disengaged*). The prevalence of teasing and bullying (PTB) was measured with a five-item scale completed by 39,364 7th and 8th grade students and 9,134 teachers in 388 schools. Student and teacher reports within each school were used to generate school level means and percentiles. As displayed in the figure, students (plotted in red) in authoritative schools reported a prevalence of teasing and bullying that ranked at the 26th percentile of all schools, in comparison to permissive schools at the 48th percentile, authoritarian schools at the 49th percentile, and disengaged schools at the 67th percentile. Teacher perceptions (plotted in blue) showed a similar pattern. These analyses controlled for differences in size, poverty level, and minority composition of the student enrollment.



Practical Suggestions. Teasing and bullying can be a serious school problem that impairs student academic performance as well as emotional and social adjustment. To build an authoritative school climate, teachers and other school authorities should have high disciplinary expectations that are strictly but fairly enforced. In addition, they must build supportive relationships so that students feel cared for and respected. They should encourage students to trust them and seek help for problems or concerns such as bullying. Finally, to address bullying and teasing directly, schools should implement evidence-based bullying prevention programs, as described at <http://www.stopbullying.gov/> and <http://nrepp.samhsa.gov/>.

Study Overview. The Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey (including scales from the Authoritative School Climate Survey) was administered as a component of the Virginia School Safety Audit program carried out by the Virginia Center for School Safety of the Department of Criminal Justice Services, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Education. The survey was designed to yield practical information on school climate and safety conditions that can be used to improve conditions for learning. The survey was developed by researchers (P.I. Dewey Cornell) with the Youth-Nex Center to Promote Effective Youth Development and the Virginia Youth Violence Project of the Curry School of Education, University of Virginia. This project was supported by Grant #2012-JF-FX-0062 awarded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. This is a correlational study that can support, but not prove, causal relationships. More detailed analyses are available from the Virginia Youth Violence Project: <<http://youthviolence.edschool.virginia.edu>>.