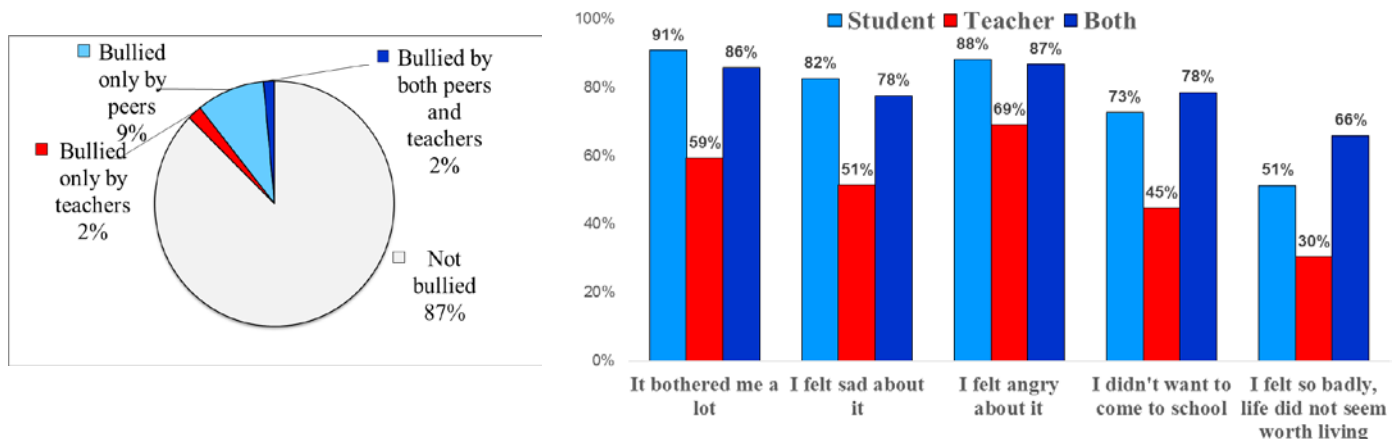


## 1 in 25 Middle School Students Report Bullying by Teachers

Although the negative effects of peer bullying among middle school students are widely recognized, bullying by teachers (including other adults in school) has received little attention. According to the 2015 Virginia School Climate Survey completed by 56,508 7th and 8th grade students and 8,585 teachers in 415 schools, approximately 4% of students in grades 7-8 reported that they had been bullied by teachers or other adults at school this year. Although the survey could not confirm that specific instances of teacher bullying took place, 15% of teachers and 38% of students statewide reported that they observed bullying by teachers to occur in their school. The survey definition was “a teacher or other adult at school bullies a student by repeatedly punishing or criticizing a student unfairly. This goes beyond what is normal discipline in the school.”

As shown in the pie chart, 13% of students reported being bullied by peers and/or teachers/staff at school. The bar chart shows the reactions of three student groups: (1) bullied only by peers; (2) bullied by a teacher or other adult at school; and (3) bullied by both. Students bullied only by peers reported stronger reactions than those bullied by teachers; however, all three groups reported substantial distress. These findings call for more attention to the problem of teacher/staff bullying.



**Practical Suggestions.** The problem of teacher bullying is likely limited to a small group of teachers. There are school programs geared towards improving teacher-student relations that could ameliorate teacher bullying. My Teaching Partner-Secondary (MTP-S) is a teacher coaching program that has been used in Virginia schools and found to improve teacher class management skills and lead to improved student behavior and academic performance (Gregory et al., 2014). Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is a school-wide disciplinary approach that emphasizes proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments.

<https://www.pbis.org>

Gregory, A., Allen, J. P., Mikami, A. Y., Hafen, C. A., & Pianta, R. C. (2014). Effects of a professional development program on behavioral engagement of students in middle and high school. *Psychology in the Schools, 51*, 143-163. doi: 10.1002/pits.21741

**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) at 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, and Grant #NIJ 2014-CK-BX-0004 awarded by the National Institute of Justice, both from the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the authors 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>>.