



Pride Data on School Safety and Academic Achievement

All data were collected from Alabama students in the 2005-06 through 2008-09 school years. These displays are based on 6th-8th grade students, with the N's ranging from about 115,000 in 2005-06 to almost 125,000 in 2008-09.

Educational achievement data were taken from the Alabama Reading and Mathematics Test (ARMT) given every year to 3rd-8th grade students. In the ARMT, for both mathematics (blue displays) and reading (red displays), students are classified into four groups. The percentage of the school's students who were classified as being in the top two groups is plotted along the vertical axis.

Pride survey results are plotted along the x-axis:

- To the left, the percentage of the school's students who reported that they felt safe in their school's relatively unsupervised areas (i.e., hallways, bathrooms, in the parking lot).
- To the right, the percentage of the school's students who reported that their school has clear rules on bullying and threatening other students in school.

These data points are based on individual-level results aggregated to the school building level. Each data point (N=5,186) represents one school at a specific grade level for a specific year.

Conclusions:

1. One interpretation is that school safety improves academic achievement. Certainly plausible—when kids are feeling safe and secure they can be more focused on learning.
2. A second interpretation is that both academic achievement and school safety issues are caused by a common source—e.g., good school administration. Also quite plausible.
3. It is possible and practical to collect social/psychological data (such as the Pride survey) at the school-building level on a statewide basis.
4. The effort is inexpensive. Pride's Alabama survey costs the state about \$300,000.
5. In a well run project, the data can be collected without controversy or undue burden on either the schools or students.
6. Once the survey becomes routine, virtually all schools participate, even when participation is voluntary.
7. Large, valuable data sets already exist that are relevant to the school safety/academic achievement relationship.

