Section B

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health
School Connectedness and Risk Behavior

- Research from The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add-Health) has shown a strong association between school connectedness and every risk behavior studied.
The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health
- A stratified random sample of 80 high schools with primary feeder schools
- N = 134 schools (127 participated in school survey)
- N = 71,515 students in 7th through 12th grade
- N = 127 school administrator surveys
129 Schools (79%) 90,118 (75.6%)

- Saturation
- High income African American
- Twins
- Disability

N = 15,243

Core
In-school survey and school rosters

Teen
N = 12,105 (79.5%)

Parent
N = 10,471 (86.5%)

Teen

Wave 2
(1996)

Wave 1
(1994-95)

In-School Sample (1994)

In-Home Samples (1995)

Special

Add-Health Sample Design
Methods: The Sample

- Ethnicity
  - Black: 15.0%
  - Latino: 12.2%
  - White: 72.8%

- Gender
  - Female: 51.8%
  - Male: 49.2%
Connected Students Are Less Likely to Use Substances

The graph shows the level of substance use (in SD units) across different levels of connectedness. The levels are: Not at all, Very little, Somewhat, Quite a bit, and A lot. The substances represented are Alcohol, Cigarettes, and Marijuana. The data indicates that students who feel more connected are less likely to use substances, with alcohol and marijuana showing a higher level of use compared to cigarettes at the 'A lot' level of connectedness.
Connected Students Experience Less Emotional Distress

![Bar chart showing levels of connectedness and emotional distress.](chart.png)

- **Levels of connectedness:** Not at all, Very little, Somewhat, Quite a bit, A lot
- **Emotional distress:** Higher levels for those less connected
- **Suicide:** Lower levels for those less connected
Connected Students Engage in Less Violent or Deviant Behavior

- Not at all
- Very little
- Somewhat
- Quite a bit
- A lot

Level of violation or deviant behavior (SD units)

Deviant behavior
Violence
Connected Students Are Less Likely to Become Pregnant

![Bar chart showing the percentage of students who were ever pregnant at different levels of connectedness. The chart indicates that students who feel connected (Not at all, Very little, Somewhat, Quite a bit) have a lower percentage of pregnancies compared to those who feel a lot less connected.](image-url)
Research Questions

- What contributes to teens feeling connected to school?
- Why do some adolescents feel attached to school and others don’t?
- What school characteristics predict connectedness?
**Methods: School Characteristics**

- **Size**: 42 to 5,422 (average = 642)
- **Public**: 82.7%
- **Class size**: 10 to 39 (average = 23)
- **Location**
  - Rural: 18.6%
  - Suburban: 59.6%
  - Urban: 21.8%
Methods: Teacher Characteristics

- Master’s degree: 42%
- 1st year teachers: 9%
Scales: Discipline Policies

- Out of school suspension for smoking
- Out of school suspension for cheating
- 10 item scale (alpha = .78) for disciplinary policy of school for the following:
  - Possessing alcohol
  - Drinking alcohol
  - Possessing an illegal substance
  - Using an illegal substance
  - Destroying school property
  - Verbally abusing a teacher
  - Fighting
  - Injuring a teacher
  - Injuring another student
  - Carrying a weapon
Scales

- Classroom management eight items: alpha = .83
  - Getting along with teachers
  - Getting along with other students
  - Paying attention in school
  - Getting homework done
Scales: School Connectedness

- I feel close to people at this school
- I am happy to be at this school
- I feel like I am part of this school
- The teachers at this school treat students fairly
- I feel safe in this school
Factors associated with school connectedness

- The school
  - School size mattered . . . classroom size did not
  - School type is not associated with connectedness . . . public, private, parochial
  - Location of school is not associated with connectedness . . . urban, suburban, rural
Results

- Factors associated with school connectedness:
  - School policies
    - No single school policy was associated with connectedness
    - A climate of harsh discipline is associated with lower school connectedness
    - The directionality of the relationship cannot be deduced from the present study
Results

- Factors associated with school connectedness
  - Teachers
    - Teacher experience was not associated with connectedness
    - Having a master’s degree was not associated with connectedness
Results

- Factors associated with school connectedness
  - School climate and classroom management
    - The single strongest association with connectedness was school climate
Initiated Cigarette Use

Predicted Percentage at Three Levels of Teacher Support

-1 s.d.  | Mean  | +1 s.d.

Multinomial logit models adjusted for social belonging, race/ethnicity, income, gender, family structure, emotional distress, relationship with parents, hx of peer suicide, hx of family suicide.
Initiated Getting Drunk

Predicted Percentage at Three Levels of Teacher Support

-1 s.d.  Mean  +1 s.d.

None to occasional  None to regular

Multinomial logit models adjusted for social belonging, race/ethnicity, income, gender, family structure, emotional distress, relationship with parents, hx of peer suicide, hx of family suicide.
Initiated Marijuana Use

Predicted Percentage at Three Levels of Teacher Support

Multinomial logit models adjusted for social belonging, race/ethnicity, income, gender, family structure, emotional distress, relationship with parents, hx of peer suicide, hx of family suicide.
Seriously Considered or Attempted Suicide

Predicted Percentage at Three Levels of Teacher Support

-1 s.d.  
Mean  
+1 s.d.

Percent

None to occasional  
None to regular

Multinomial logit models adjusted for social belonging, race/ethnicity, income, gender, family structure, emotional distress, relationship with parents, hx of peer suicide, hx of family suicide.
Initiated Violence

Predicted Percentage at Three Levels of Teacher Support

-1 s.d.  Mean  +1 s.d.

Percent

Multinominal logit models adjusted for social belonging, race/ethnicity, income, gender, family structure, emotional distress, relationship with parents, hx of peer suicide, hx of family suicide.