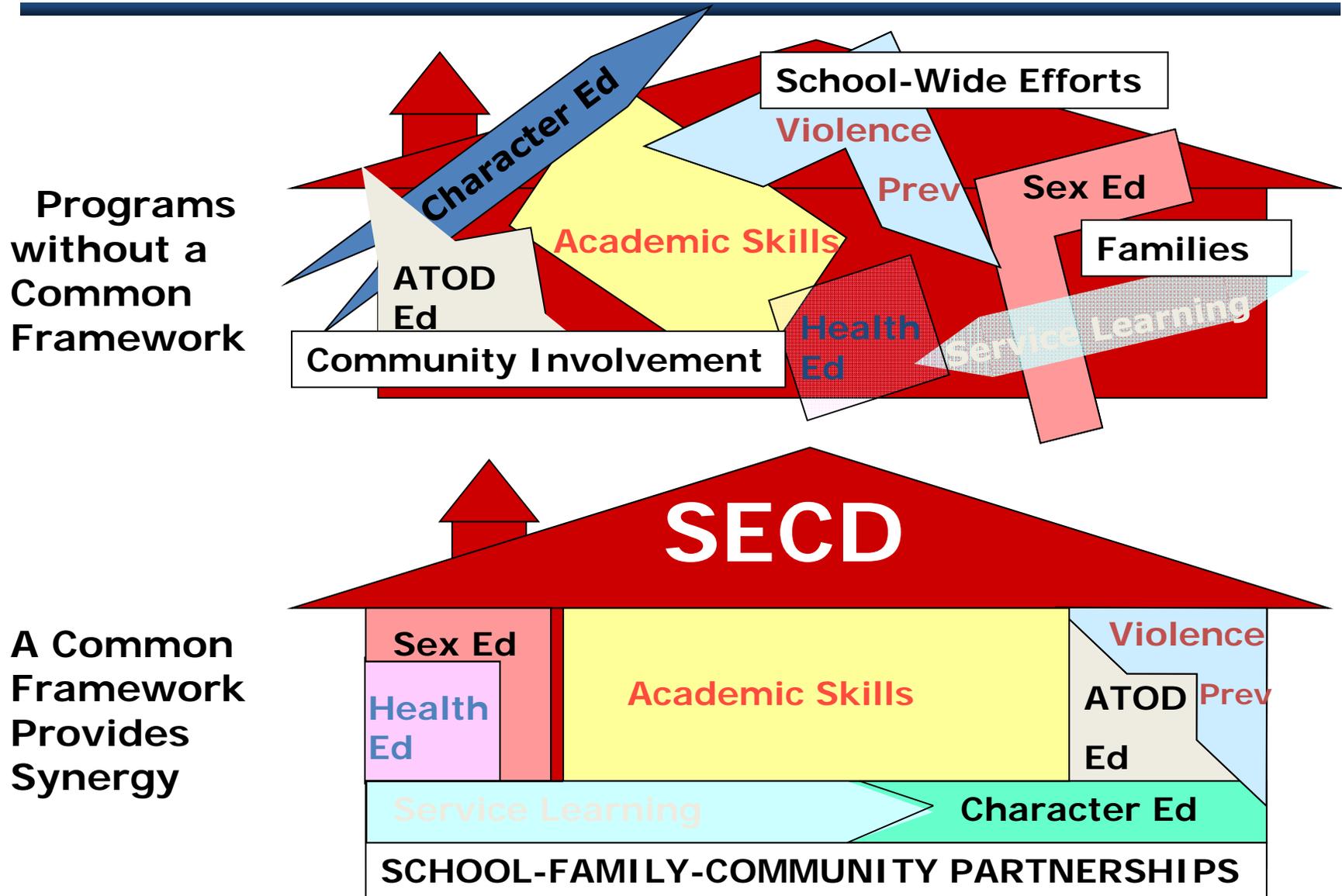


***Why Should the ESEA Systematically  
Include Social-Emotional and  
Character Development as Essential  
for Students' Academic and Life  
Success?***

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**Presentation at a Congressional Briefing  
Senate Office Building, Washington, D. C.  
May 12, 2011**

# Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD): *A Coordinated Framework Provides Synergy*

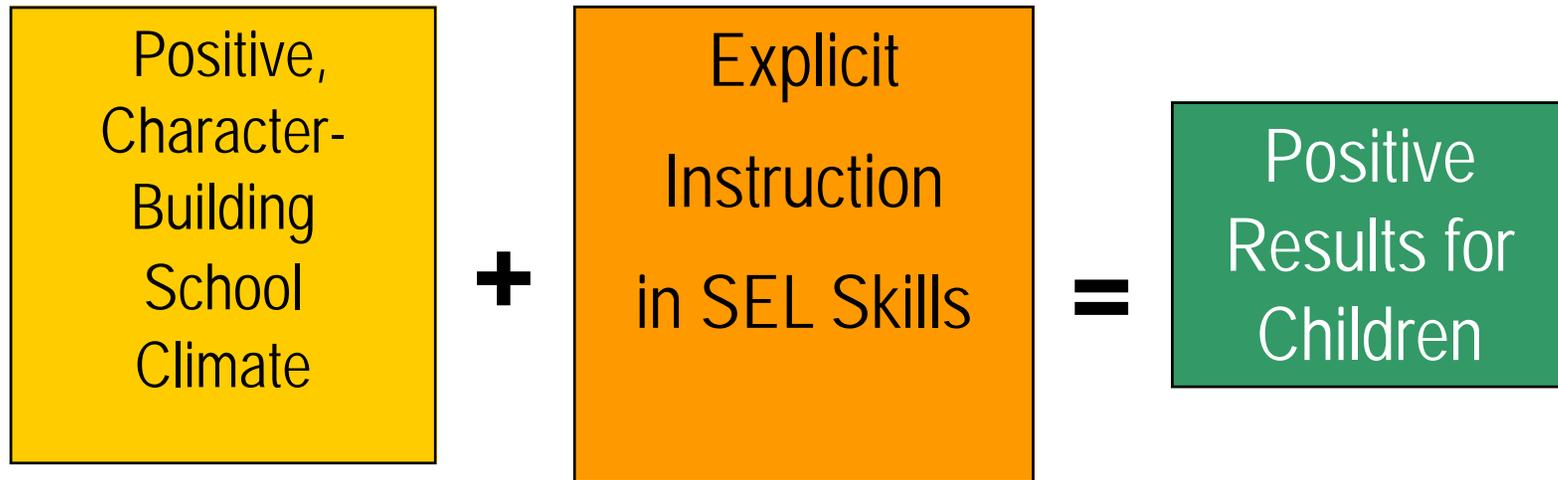


# What is Social-Emotional and Character Development (SECD)?

- a set of **skills and dispositions/essential life habits**
- that can be **built developmentally** if we do so with intentionality, focus, and continuity, and
- **schools are the place** where most children can be reached systematically,
- because the same set of skills and habits ultimately **mediate academic, civic, and workplace success!!!**

# How Does SECD Work?

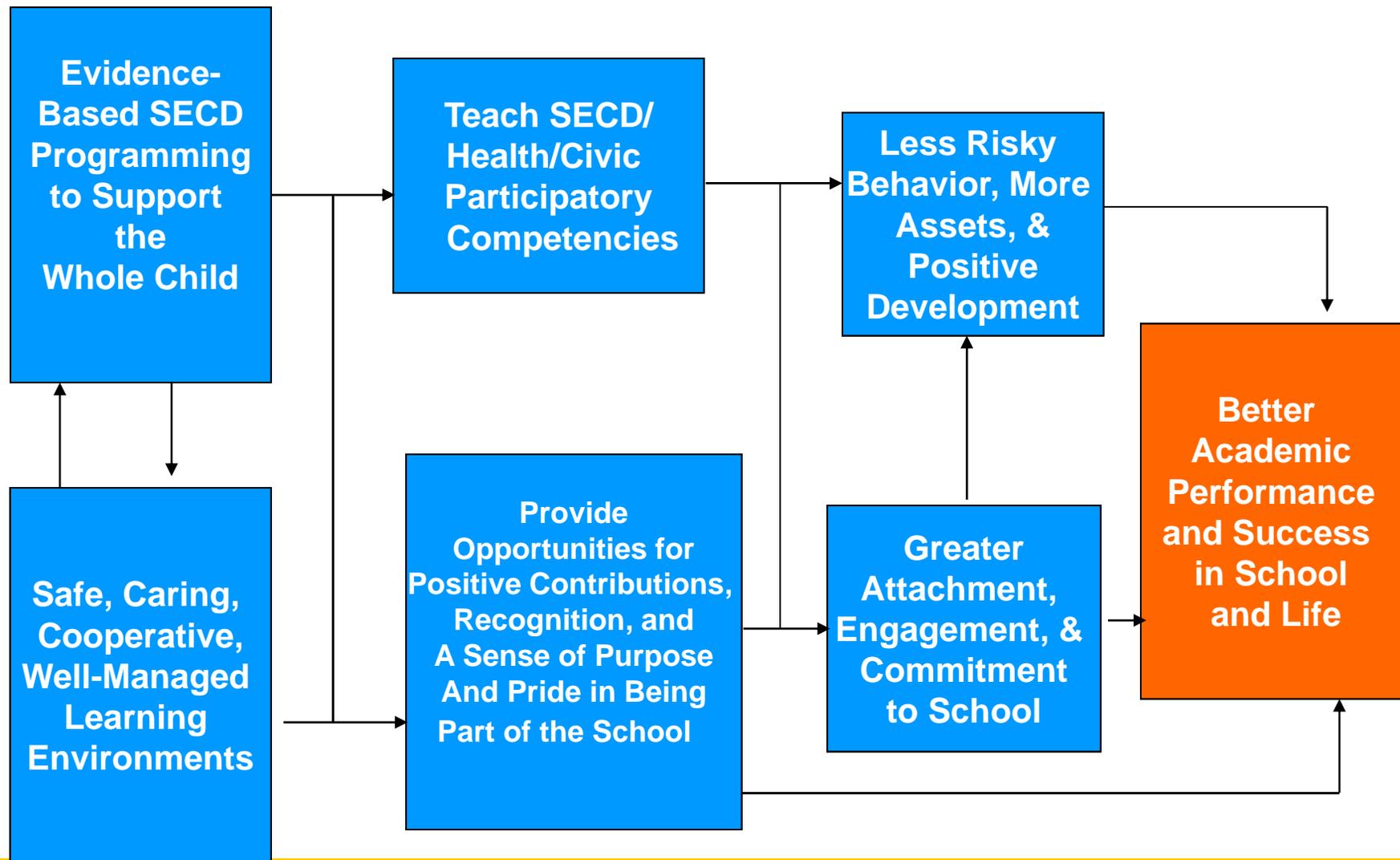
SECD is an evidence-based strategy that integrates the intellectual, emotional, and social facets of learning. It works through two related approaches:



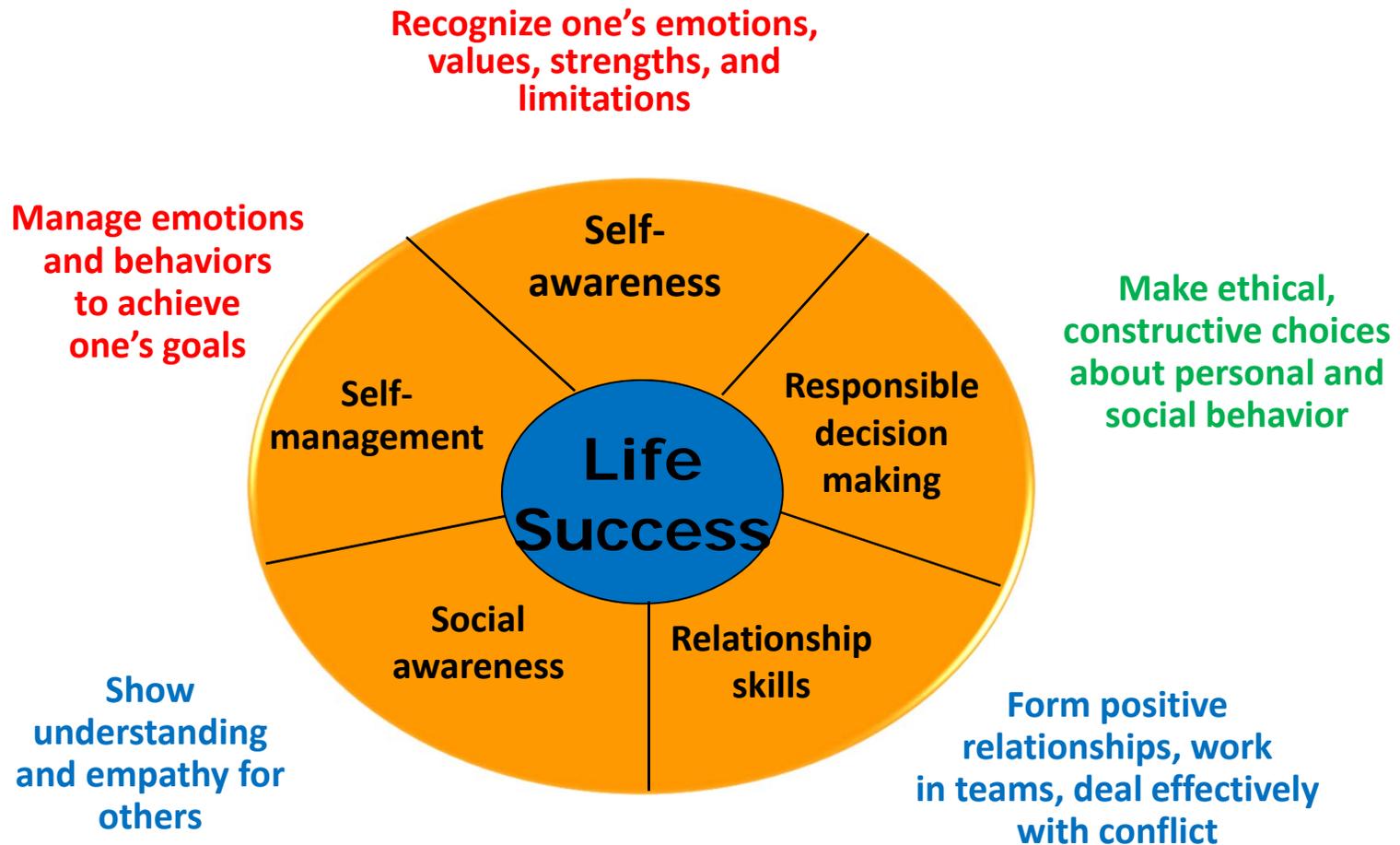
**Source:** *SEL and Academics: Research Brief*, Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, 2007.

# Paths to Success in School and in Life:

Success Requires a Confluence of SECD and Classroom and School Environment



# What Skills are Needed for Success in School and Life/Participatory Competencies?



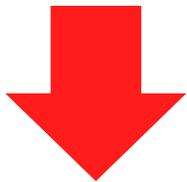
# Benefits of SECD

## Good Science Links SECD to the Following Student Gains:



- Social-emotional skills
- Improved attitudes about self, others, and school
- Positive classroom behavior
- 10-11 percentile-point gains on standardized achievement tests

## And Reduced Risks for Failure:



- Conduct problems
- Aggressive behavior
- Emotional distress

**Source:** Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*. (available at [www.casel.org](http://www.casel.org)) and M. Berkowitz & M. Bier, *What works in character education*. (Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership, 2006) (available at [www.characterandcitizenship.org](http://www.characterandcitizenship.org).)

# **Systematic SECD Serves as the Connecting Thread by:**

- **guiding schools to identify a focal set of essential life habits/values and social-emotional skills**
- **continually enhancing the transfer of SECD from formal classroom instruction to everyday life**
- **providing a common, proven strategy and set of approaches for students in need of special support and mainstream students**
- **reinforcing SECD learning in all aspects of the school day and throughout the home-school-community relationship.**

# Key Recommendations to Guide Policy

- Each student should receive a minimum of **one-half hour of explicit instruction per week in skills related to social-emotional and character development (SECD)** as part of a comprehensive prek-12 scope and sequence (see Anchorage, Alaska, public schools for an example of such a framework, as well Appendix C of CASEL's *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators*).
- Every teacher, student support services provider, and administrator should have **demonstrated competence** in implementing evidence-based SECD programming and positive climate promotion at the classroom and/or school level (as appropriate).

# Key Recommendations to Guide Policy

- Every school should undertake a systematic **assessment of staff and student perceptions of school climate**, including school safety/bullying and student engagement/participation/voice, at least once every two years and use that feedback in a staff-wide data review for systematic improvement of SECD competencies and school climate in schools that have a clear sense of meaning and purpose. (In Middle and High Schools, students should be involved in the data review and planning process.)
- Support the **Safe, Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center**, based on models in Illinois and New Jersey, to effectively implement SECD elements in ESEA.

# Why We Must Be Proactive: The World is not Waiting for Schools to Teach SECD

If you had a magic wand, what 3 values would you wish for children to be able to internalize strongly, forever?

- Friendship
- Peace
- Wisdom
- Beauty
- Long Life
- Riches
- Popularity
- Family

# **CHALLENGES CHILDREN BRING WITH THEM INTO SCHOOL EACH DAY**

- Increased pace of life
- Greater economic demands on parents
- Alterations in family composition and stability
- Breakdown of neighborhoods and extended families
- Weakening of community institutions
- Unraveling of parent-child bonds due to work, school demands, time, drugs, mental health, and economic burdens
- Climate of war, terror, and societal bullying and intimidation
- Ongoing exposure to an array of digital media and pervasive advertising that encourage violence as a problem-solving tool and other health-damaging behaviors and unrealistic lifestyles

# DSACS Data on Bully-Climate- Voice Connection

- **Data from Years 3 and 4 of the DSACS project, the first years in which we collected anonymous data on students' perception of bullying.**
- **We examined the relationship between the degree of bullying in school and the extent to which students felt they were being given useful strategies to handle bullying, and their perception of the school climate. The overall data set represents 115 schools and 48 districts, and 48,000 students, across the full range of DFG's (SES) in NJ, across the entire state geographically.**
- **Across all data sets for both years, for disadvantaged schools vs. others, and for elementary, middle, and high schools, the findings were remarkably consistent.**

# Key Findings

- Bullying is related to the climate of the school and is most strongly and significantly related to the **respect that students feel in the school**, especially among their peers.
- Where there is a respectful environment, bullying is less likely to exist in schools.

# Key Findings

- The extent to which students feel they are truly learning strategies to cope with HIB in their schools is most strongly related to the:
  - extent to which they perceive teachers as being *caring and supportive to students and to one-another*, and secondarily to extent to which students feel they are *involved in shaping their school environment in positive ways*.
- Students appear to find HIB prevention and intervention messages valuable when staff members are seen as genuinely caring and when students are engaged in the school.

# The High School Study

- 21 high schools in 2008-9, 13,593 students in the sample; all SES levels included
- Bullying correlates between  $-.72$  and  $-.89$  with the following climate indicators:
  - Student Respect Friendliness and Belonging
  - Students Shaping Their Environment
  - Support and Care By and Among Staff
  - Student Approval
  - Student Perceptions Of Utility Of Learning
  - Teacher Approval (How much teachers like the school)
  - Overall Climate (Average of 16 variables)

# School Climate and NJ H.S. Violence and Vandalism Data (EVVRS)

We looked at the relationship of school climate to overall count of incidents on EVVRS for 08-09 (EVVRS-TOT), incidents of violence (EVVRS-VIOL), vandalism (EVVRS-VAND), substance abuse (EVVRS- ABUSE), and weapons possession (EVVRS-WEAP):

- Overall Climate  $r = -.44$  (TOT),  $-.41$  (VIOL)
- Students Shaping Environment  $r = -.48$  (TOT),  $-.43$  (VIOL)
- Teacher Approval/Liking of School  $r = -.44$  (TOT),  $-.45$  (VIOL),  $-.65$  (ABUSE)
- Student Pride in School  $r = -.62$  (TOT),  $-.58$  (VIOL),  $-.41$  (ABUSE)
- Support and Care By and Among Staff  $r = -.41$  (ABUSE)

# Research Confirms Long-Held Good Sense

- *To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.* -- Theodore Roosevelt
- *We are going to ask our children not just to talk but to act, serve, and live in accordance with a set of higher values and with a buoyant optimism.*-- R. Sargent Shriver
- *Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.* -- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.