



REL Southwest study: Understanding the role of noncognitive skills and school environments in students' transitions to high school

Ginger Stoker, PhD, Senior Researcher, REL Southwest

Brenda Arellano, PhD, Senior Researcher, REL Southwest

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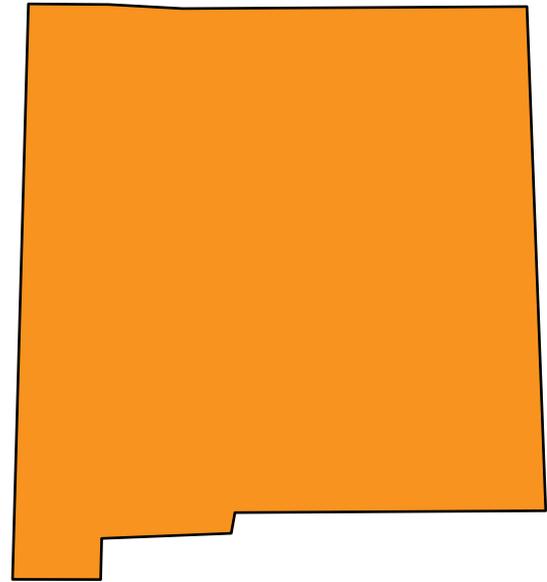
Background

This study investigated how school climate and social-emotional factors relate to three measures of successful grade 9 transitions:

Freshman grade point average

Course failures

Attendance



School sample

- 3 majority Hispanic and White districts
- 2 majority American Indian and Hispanic districts
- 1 majority Hispanic district
- 1 majority American Indian district
- 1 White, Hispanic, and American Indian district

12 total high schools



Student sample

27% American Indian

48% Hispanic

25% White

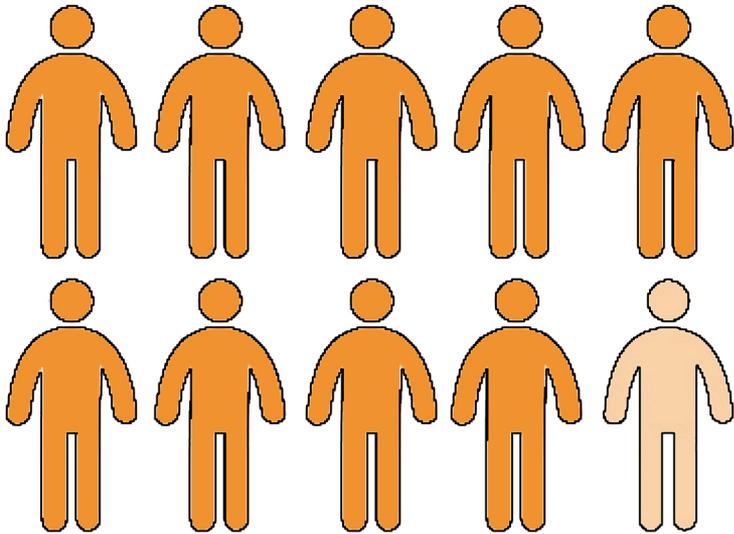
9% English learners

10% Special education

59% Low income



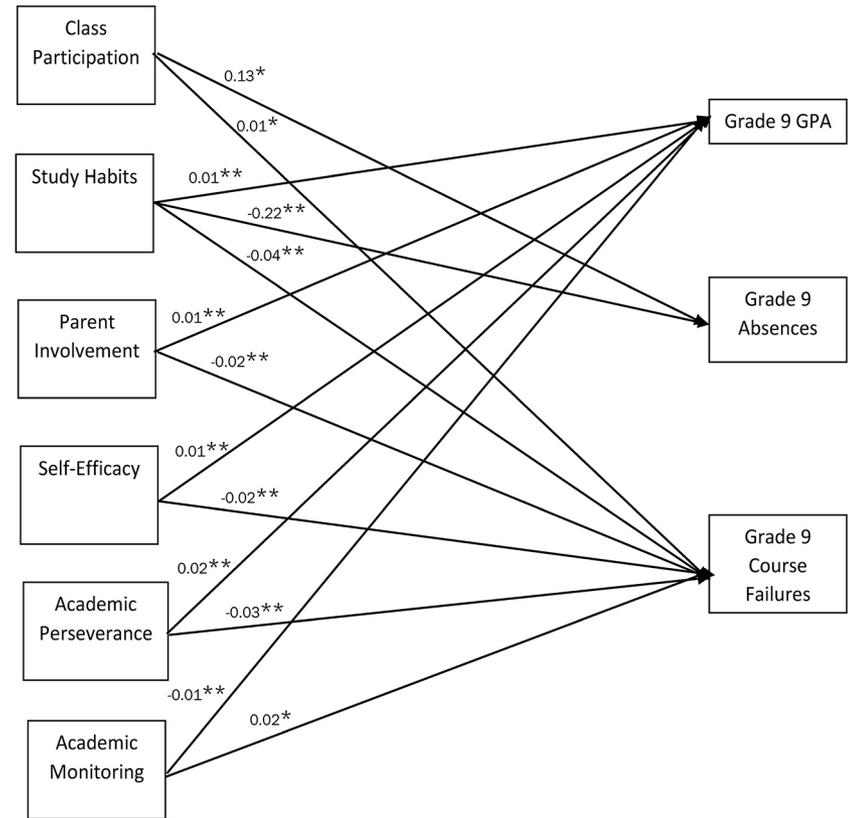
2,995 grade 9 students completed surveys.



93%

Response rate across participating high schools.

Structural equation modeling was used to look at relationships between student and school climate factors.



Student factors

Study habits

Parent involvement

Self-efficacy

Academic perseverance



**These student factors
had statistically
significant and positive
associations with...**

Grade 9 GPA

- **Study habits**
- **Parent involvement**
- **Self-efficacy**
- **Academic perseverance**



**These student factors
had statistically
significant associations
in the expected
direction with...**

Grade 9 Absences

- **Study habits**



**These student factors
had statistically
significant associations
in the expected
direction with...**

Grade 9 Course Failures

- **Study habits**
- **Parent involvement**
- **Self-efficacy**
- **Academic perseverance**



School climate factors

- **Sense of belonging**
- **Student respect**
- **Future orientation**
- **Teacher support**



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Grade 9 GPA

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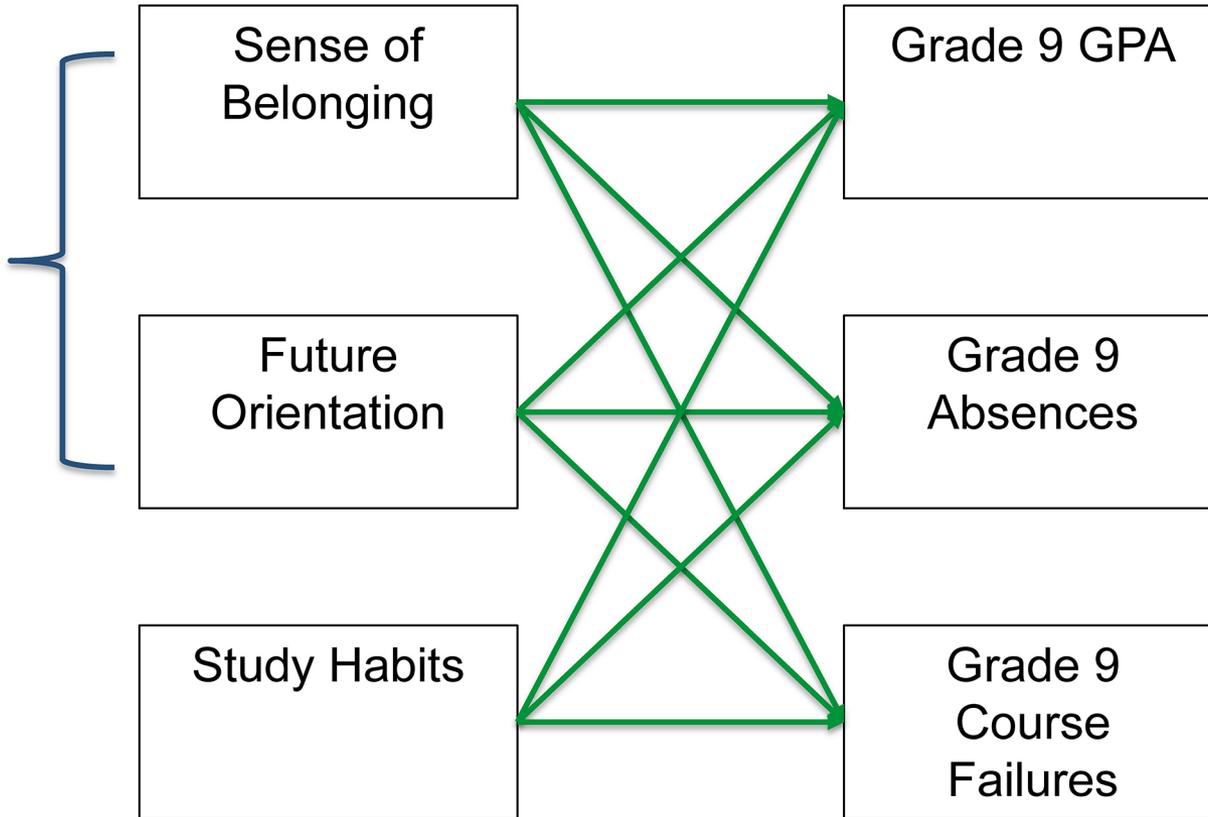
Grade 9 Absences

- **Sense of belonging**
- **Future orientation**



3 factors were associated with all three grade 9 outcomes

School climate



For more details about the study, download the full report available on the REL Southwest website:

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southwest/publications.aspx>



Making Connections

December 2017

Understanding the role of noncognitive skills and school environments in students' transitions to high school

Ginger Stoker
Feng Liu
Brenda Arellano
American Institutes for Research

Key findings

This study used data from high school students in New Mexico to examine how their perceptions of their noncognitive skills and school environments are related to three outcomes shown by previous research to be predictive of a successful transition to high school—grade 9 grade point average, course failures, and absences. The study found that:

- American Indian students had statistically significantly higher scores than White students on survey scales measuring preparation for the future, school discipline, student respect, peer support, academic monitoring, and future orientation.
- Hispanic students had statistically significantly higher scores than White students on survey scales measuring future orientation and student respect.
- Students' perceptions of most of the noncognitive skills and school environments assessed by the survey were statistically significantly associated with their grade 9 outcomes.
- Student race/ethnicity had statistically significant indirect effects on students' grade 9 outcomes through students' perceptions of their noncognitive skills and school environments.

View our video

This video highlights the key findings from REL Southwest's report [*Understanding the Role of Noncognitive Skills and School Environments in Students' Transitions to High School.*](#)

The video describes how New Mexico students' perceptions of academic supports, high school transitions, and school environment correspond to high school success, particularly for American Indian and Hispanic students. In addition, the conclusion provides practical takeaways for school, district, and state education leaders.



Questions?

