

## ACT Research and Policy

Research Reports  
Educator Reports  
Policy Reports  
Issue/Information Briefs

## Information Brief

September 2012

# Fostering a Positive and Supportive Learning Atmosphere

A Look at Higher Performing High Schools

Results advocate the importance of safe, supportive, and orderly learning environments.

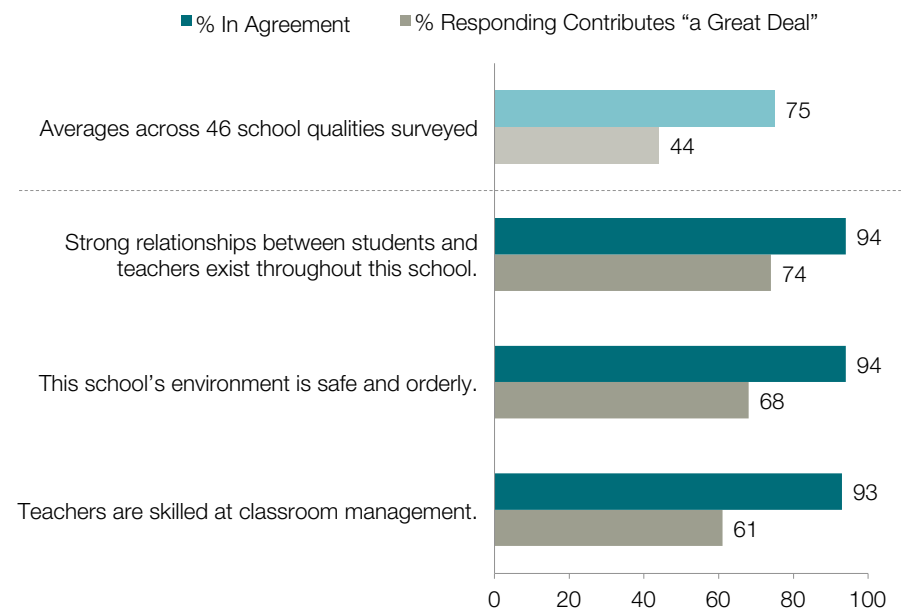
Other ACT research suggests the importance of early monitoring of academic behaviors and psychosocial factors such as motivation, social engagement, and self-regulation.<sup>1</sup>

*Agreement* ratings for each survey item were calculated as the percentage of educators who agreed or strongly agreed that the item described their school. *Contribution* ratings were calculated as the percentage of educators who rated the item as “contributing a great deal to student achievement.”

A fall 2011 study surveyed teachers and administrators from higher performing high schools and assessed what school qualities educators see as contributing most to student achievement.

Educators at the higher performing high schools place great importance on factors related to school climate, including relationships between teachers and students, having a safe and orderly environment, and teachers being skilled in classroom management. The chart shows that ratings were clearly higher for these school qualities than were typically reported across all 46 qualities surveyed.

### School Qualities Fostering a Positive and Supportive Learning Atmosphere



Note: Data come from 272 educators from 63 high performing high schools across 25 states. Schools were selected based on students' growth towards college and career readiness or based on improvement in average ACT scores over time.

<sup>1</sup> Casillas et al. (2011). Development and Validation of ENGAGE™ Grades 6-9. ACT Research Report 2011-1. Iowa City: ACT, Inc.

[infobrief@act.org](mailto:infobrief@act.org) for more information or to suggest ideas for future ACT Information Briefs.

[www.act.org/research](http://www.act.org/research)

