**Context**
School culture and climate was found to be associated with youth substance use, school victimization, school misconduct and low academic performance (DeWit, 2002).

**Aim**
To examine opinions of 14-years-old students about selected dimensions of school culture in two Warsaw middle schools chosen because of the high or low prevalence of student risky behaviors (alcohol, cigarette, pain reliever use, violence).

**Method**
The study was conducted in 2010 in four purposely selected Warsaw schools; two “good” and two “bad”. Two schools were selected for further analysis - a school labeled “A” with the highest and a school labeled “B” with the lowest indicators of risky behaviors. Essays written by 143 students (from schools A and B) about the theme “How are you getting along with your school?” were analyzed.

**Results**

### Risky behaviors in school A and in school B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>School A</th>
<th>School B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol use</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pain reliever use</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco use</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent behaviors</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional information**
Use of social service | 23% | 7% |

**School A**
- Lack of respect, tolerance, vulgarism
- Aggressive, violent behaviors and bullying
- Drug use
- Negative attitudes towards good students
- Conflict between fans of two different football clubs

**School B**
- Fights
- Cigarette smoking at the school toilets
- Damaged school property
- Unfriendly behaviors of affluent students

**Students' bonding**
- I feel like crying
- I feel nervous
- I feel bad
- I feel good

**School climate**
**Relationship between teachers and students**
- Teachers' positive attitudes towards students: “Teachers respect students, during lessons is good climate (…), teachers are nice, indulgent (…)”
- Readiness to help students: “I like that some teachers are ready to work over time to help students to improve their school performance”
- Teachers' reaction for students' problem behaviors: “Teachers don’t react in the situations when students humiliate other students”
- Annoying behaviors of teachers: “(Teacher)… is not okay, always makes fun of me and calls me ‘orphan’, because I'm not good enough in physical exercises”
- Discipline during lessons: “(…) teachers after 20 ineffective attempts to stop students talking, put a bad mark or write a note”
- Time of break: “To sit up at the desk all day long without possibility to go outside during breaks is very boring for very ambitious and vigorous 14-years-old teenagers”

**Conclusions**
- Students from school A described more severe problems in area of school culture and climate (e.g. insecurity) than students from school B
- Teachers’ lack of skills in effective coping with student risky behaviors was found to be a key factor associated with students’ negative attitudes toward school