School Environment Surveys

Parent – Staff - Student

School Environment

Contact Administrator

What is School Environment?

School environment includes everything within the school from leadership to classroom practices to students' feelings of connectedness. For clarity, it is separated into two categories: (1) *School Climate* – defined as the "affect of the school" and (2) *School Culture* – defined as "the way things are done in the school."

Why is School Climate Important?

School climate is the affect of the school. Think back to your favorite teacher. What was so special about that person? Was it relationship? Most likely you had a sense of caring and belonging; you felt safe, both emotionally and academically; you felt the satisfaction of learning a lot in that classroom. Of course, climate is more than just the affect of one teacher; it is the whole school experience. Students attending schools with a healthy, positive climates share a sense of belonging, the school as a learning community, competence to succeed, safety, engagement, and personal fulfillment. This is an environment nearly devoid of student problems such as bullying. It is a school "without failure," a place where all students can learn. Students' sense of belonging is the highest single predictor of student social-emotional and academic behavior.

Schools that have positive, caring climates also have high levels of student academic learning and pro-social/moral student behavior,

Why is School Culture Important?

School culture is the way things are done in the school. This determines the school climate which directly impacts student learning and pro-social/moral behavior.

Many schools have a competitive culture that relies on strong teacher control with rewards and punishment to promote student learning and pro-social behavior. Students who demonstrate the correct behavior (or obtain high test scores) are singled out and rewarded for their success. These rewards might include extra recess time, coupons to the local pizza parlor, bumper stickers for parents' cars, acknowledgment at an awards assembly, or a trip to the principal's office to dip into the "treasure chest." Students who do not exhibit the correct behavior are punished by never receiving rewards. While this might seem to provide quick results (for some students), over time it fosters an unhealthy, negative climate of winners and losers. Such schools often have high levels of discipline problems such as bullying (even with strict no-variance policies) and sub-optimum student achievement.

Many other schools support a collaborative environment where all students share in recognition and feelings of success. There is deliberate effort to catch every student doing something right. It is a learning culture where teachers work together and students cooperate with each other. Parents, staff and students have determined the core values for the school and integrated them into all aspects of the schooling process. Collaborative teaching-learning practices such as class meetings. learning circles, cross-grade groupings, school-home activities, and school-wide activities are common. Student motivation is a result of school staff developing student character through a sense of belonging, students having voice in the schooling process, andstudents feeling competent in the school setting. Students do the right thing because it is the right thing to do; they complete assignments for their own learning, not simply to satisfy a teacher. Cheating all but disappears.

A collaborative school culture promotes a positive, caring school climate.

Why measure School Culture and Climate?

School climate is the primary determinant of student social-emotional and academic learning. Factors such as students' sense of belonging, autonomy and influence, competence, engagement and safety are the primary predictors of student learning. Regular assessment of these school characteristics as seen by parents, staff and students reveals how the school is doing. The simple question is: *Are we optimizing our success?*

But, to measure school climate without assessing school culture is like attempting to drive a car without any fuel. How things are done determines the climate of the school. School culture must be measured along with school climate. School culture assessment provides information on the question: *What school processes are being implemented and to what degree?*

School climate information provides indices reflecting the level of success in developing or maintaining a healthy, caring community; school culture information provides insights on how well school processes are being implemented. Together, this information provides what is needed to proceed with solid data-based planning for school optimization.

School Climate and Culture Surveys for Data-Based Planning

We provide user-friendly web-based student, parent and staff surveys that provide school culture and climate information for data-based planning. There are nine culture factors and 10 climate factors. The surveys are based on over a decade of research. The initial student surveys drew items from surveys developed for use in a Utah state project and by the Child Development Center in California for assessing the Caring School Community® program. In 2002 these surveys were modified based on the

theoretical constructs comprising The CHARACTER*plus* Way® and Caring School Community The CHARACTER*plus* Way® federally funded research projects. Factor analysis and Q-Sort techniques were used to verify factor validity. Since 2002 there have been three additional updates to refine and add culture and climate factors and to progress into electronically administered surveys. Following are the attributes and advantages of these surveys.

ATTRIBUTES	ADVANTAGES
Easy to use, web-based surveys that take only 10 to 20 minutes to administer	★ Fast and friendly ★ Can administer to any number of parents, staff or students; no limit ★ Files secure; no loss of data ★ Quickly convert from data files to school reports
Survey students grades 3 - 12	★ Can survey all students grades 3 – 12 ★ Students in middle school and higher have a longer survey, differences in surveys not perceptible
Assess 9 School Culture factors and 10 School Climate factors	Surveys provide a comprehensive picture of the school's culture and climate. Many factors overlap on the parent, staff and student surveys allowing for meaningful comparisons. See below for a listing of the factors assessed.
Comprehensive School Report	★ In-depth report providing descriptive statistical data for each group surveyed that includes mean, standard deviation and number of persons surveyed (see below for easy interpretation). ★ Both easy to read tables and interval graphs provided. ★ Reports contain step-by-step guidelines for interpreting data and for using the report in data-based planning. ★ All information and materials needed for effective data-based planning are included in the report. ★ First report includes baseline data for planning; subsequent reports provide pretest and posttest data. ★ Student information broken down by grade level, gender and heritage.

ATTRIBUTES	ADVANTAGES
Secure Data	School data are protected by school ID and passwords. Only people with this information have access to the surveys.
Easy to Set Up	Once we have your school invoice or order form and school information, we can load you into the system and provide you with your school ID and passwords.

Easy and Meaningful Data Interpretation

Results for all factors are provided in percent positive scores. This allows for a quick and easy view of the school culture and school climate. The mean scores can be interpreted as follows.

Low Implementation of Healthy School Practices Non-Collaborative Culture	Moderate Implementation of Healthy School Practices Moderately Collaborative Culture	High Implementation of Healthy School Practices Collaborative Culture
0	30 70	100

Percent Positive Factor Means

Unhealthy Climate	Moderately Healthy Climate	Healthy Climate
0	30 70	100

Percent Positive Factor Means

Both the mean and standard deviation need to be considered when interpreting school culture and climate data. The mean shows the typical perception level and the standard deviation provides the amount of agreement among respondents. The selection of implementation strategies may differ based on the homogeneity of the respondents. For example, if staff highly agree on the school culture a common set of implementation strategies might be most appropriate. However, if there is high disagreement, different strategies for different groups might be best. Following is the guideline for interpreting the standard deviation.

Agreement	Moderate Disagreement		Disagreement	
0	10		20	Highest
	Standard Deviations			

Survey Factors Assessed

Following are the 19 factors assessed. The 10 school climate factors are labeled in black; the 9 school culture factors are in rust.

Survey Factor	Survey Type		
	Parent	**Staff**	**Student***
Students' Feeling of Belonging	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students' Sense of School as a Community	Yes	Yes	Yes
Students' Sense of Autonomy and Influence (Voice)	No	Yes	Yes
Students' Feeling of Competence	No	No	Yes
Students' Sense of School Safety	No	No	Yes
Student Engagement	No	No	Yes
Alcohol and Substance Use**	No	No	Yes
Parent Involvement at School	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parent Involvement at Home	No	Yes	Yes
Parent and Staff Relations	Yes	Yes	No
School Quality	Yes	No	No
Staff Culture of Belonging	No	Yes	No
School Leadership	No	Yes	No

 * Grades 3 - 12
** Middle and high school levels only

The Implementation Survey is the staff's perceptions of the school culture and climate based on:

Context	**Process**	**Content**
Learning Community	School Climate	Classroom Practices
Leadership Support	Staff Collaboration	
	Ten Essentials	

Survey Administration

 Surveys can be administered any time during the school year; for baseline and posttest information, the time of year needs to be constant. We recommend baseline data be collected during February prior to initial planning. Posttest surveys are then administered in February during subsequent school years. Surveys are available on the web site to authorized schools under ***School Environment Surveys*** during October – December and January – March annually. School reports are available approximately six weeks after the web site is closed in December and March. A district or project with at least 10 schools, with payment through a single invoice, can be established as a separate entity with its own survey time frame.

We provide an easy to use web-based form for recording student discipline referrals.   If this option is selected, referrals are recorded for inclusion in data-based planning reports along with the student, parent and staff (including implementation) surveys.

Extensive school reports are provided summarizing survey information and providing step-by-step procedures for planning. The student survey factors are broken down by grade level, gender and heritage. Sample reports can be reviewed by clicking ***School Report***.

The surveys take 10 to 20 minutes to complete.

To set up a school for survey administration, we need the following information:
- ✓ District Name
- ✓ District Number
- ✓ School Name
- ✓ School Number
- ✓ School Level
- ✓ Invoice authorizing payment for services

After a school is loaded into the system, we will provide a School ID number and Passwords that must be used to access surveys and referral form (if used).

Sources of Data

We provide five sources of data to be used in planning:
- Surveys
  - Parent
  - Staff and Implementation
  - Student
- Student Office Referrals (optional)

Review of Surveys

On the home page, click the *School Environment Surveys* link**.** On the next screen, be sure to mark the type of survey that you want to review and enter **the School ID 0** and **Password 0**. This will allow you to step through each survey exactly like a survey respondent. This link is open October – December and January – March annually. The student survey for elementary students and student referral form are available for review anytime by clicking the links below.

Student Survey Sample   **Referral Form Sample**

Survey and Report Costs

The survey cost is $700 per school per report period. This includes access to parent, staff (including implementation) and student surveys, uploading school information, and baseline reporting the first year or pretest-posttest reporting subsequent years (at your option). There is no limit to the number of parents, staff and students that can be surveyed within a single school.

Student referrals using the student referral reporting form can be added for $50 per school. This option will be open from August – June each school year.   Cumulative reports are provided with the School Report and again at the end of June.   For an additional $70, cumulative reports can be provided monthly for October – April.

Special pricing is available for multiple schools within a single district or projects administering surveys in a single time frame and with payment using a single invoice. Contact the administrator; please provide information on the numbers of schools within the district or project.

After an invoice or official district order form has been provided, we will send a *School Information Form* for you to complete providing us with the needed information to upload your school(s) into the

system. Within two weeks from receiving the completed form, we will provide the school identification and passwords required to administer surveys.

Contact Administrator