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Monitoring and Improving School Climate With Student Surveys

Expert Presenters:

Lindsay M. Lamb, evaluation analyst, Austin Independent School District, Texas

Joaquin R. Tamayo, Jr., director, strategic initiatives, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, U.S. Department of Education
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

Today’s presenter:

– Joaquin Tamayo, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, US Department of Education

Presentation Agenda:

– School Climate: What problem is ED trying to help solve?
– ED School Climate Surveys Overview
– School Climate Improvement Resource Package Overview
– Questions and Discussion
SCHOOL CLIMATE

WHAT IS IT?

*School climate* reflects how members of the school community experience the school, including interpersonal relationships, teacher and other staff practices, and organizational arrangements.

School climate includes factors that serve as conditions for learning and that support physical and emotional safety, connection and support, and engagement.

A positive school climate reflects attention to fostering social and physical safety, providing support that enables students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards as well as encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ED IS TRYING TO HELP SOLVE?

- Overuse of exclusionary discipline in schools.
  
  - Black, Hispanic, and American Indian students are suspended at much higher rates than their White peers—sometimes at double the rate.
  
  - Twenty percent of secondary school students with disabilities were suspended in a single school year, compared to fewer than ten percent of their peers without disabilities.
  
  - LGBT youth are up to three times more likely to experience harsh disciplinary treatment than their heterosexual counterparts.
  
  - Even as various jurisdictions celebrate declines in overall suspension rates, they have noted that the disparity in some cases has widened and carried forward to expulsions and arrests.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ED IS TRYING TO HELP SOLVE?

- Educators are struggling under the weight of difficult choices, so much so that research on conditions for learning is often disregarded.

  “[P]romoting a positive school climate often takes a back seat to educators’ and administrators’ efforts to address mandates to improve test scores and graduation rates, even though strong conditions for learning have been shown to help improve academic achievement.”

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ED IS TRYING TO HELP SOLVE?

- Despite rating their own schools well, most principals and teachers are struggling under the weight of negative working conditions.
  - Three-quarters (75%) of principals feel the job has become too complex.
  - Half (48%) of principals feel under great stress several days a week.
  - Teacher satisfaction has declined 23 percentage points since 2008, from 62% to 39% very satisfied, including five percentage points since last year, to the lowest level in 25 years.
  - Half (51%) of teachers report feeling under great stress several days a week, an increase of 15 percentage points over 36% of teachers reporting that level in 1985.
  - Eighty-five percent of teachers rate the job their principal is doing as excellent or pretty good.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM ED IS TRYING TO HELP SOLVE?

- Many students report being disengaged from school and do not view school as a supportive or enjoyable place to learn.
  - Overall, half of students (grades 5-12) surveyed in 2015 (n=928,888) are engaged in school, **29% are not engaged, and 21% are actively disengaged.**
  - Survey Items = Strongly Agree
    - At this school, I get to do what I do best every day = **23%**
    - I feel safe at this school = **42%**
    - I have fun at this school = **28%**
    - The adults at my school care about me = **39%**
    - I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future = **55%**

TWO NEW RESOURCES

- ED’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) offers new, free school climate resources, including:
  - **Online school climate survey portal**—the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)—that includes survey download and data reporting features
  - Web-based **School Climate Improvement Resource Package** (SCIRP) to enable school climate survey use, data analysis, stakeholder engagement, and implementation of local school climate improvement processes
ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)
Background

• In early 2013, ED announced that a high priority would be placed on efforts to help the nation’s schools “create safer and more nurturing school climates.”

• ED’s Office of Safe and Healthy Students provided funds to NCES to develop a school climate measurement platform available to schools, school districts and states which will provide valid and reliable measures of school climate.
OSHS School Climate Model

**Domain: Engagement**
- **Topics:** Cultural and linguistic competence
- Relationships
- School participation

**Domain: Safety**
- **Topics:** Emotional safety
- Physical safety
- Bullying/cyberbullying
- Substance abuse
- Emergency readiness/management

**Domain: Environment**
- **Topics:** Physical environment
- Instructional environment
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Discipline
EDSCLS Respondents

• Middle grade (5-8) students
• High school students
• Parents / Guardians
• Teachers
• Non-instructional staff (including principals)
Administering EDSCLS

• Can be administered at school, district, or state level.
• Allows for the local storage of data, accessible only to authorized users.
• Multiple surveys (i.e., students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, and parents/guardians) can be open at the same time.
• During data collection, administrators can see how many respondents have finished the survey using the “survey status reports” feature.
SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

EDUCATION AGENCY
Edit information about your education agency and survey administrator.

DATA COLLECTION
Create, edit, and delete data collections.

RESPONDENT USERNAMES
Generate, export, and disseminate respondent usernames for data collections that have not closed yet. Exporting usernames, importing respondent e-mail addresses, and disseminating usernames via e-mail are optional features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA COLLECTION</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>GENERATED</th>
<th>EXPORTED</th>
<th>DISSEMINATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/17/2015-02/27/2015:Students</td>
<td>Started</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/17/2015-02/27/2015:Teachers/Instructional Staff</td>
<td>Started</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

REPORTS
Produce real-time survey status reports and survey results reports immediately after each data collection.

SURVEY RESULTS
Export and import survey results immediately after each data collection.
User-generated questions

## SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

### NEW SURVEY ITEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SURVEY ITEM</th>
<th>ANSWER OPTIONS</th>
<th>RESPONDENT GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults working at this school treat all students respectfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at this school give students opportunities to get involved in service projects or activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-instructional Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Web-based survey administration

WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY (SCLS)

The School Climate Survey (SCLS) is being administered by SCLS - AIR. Your responses are important to help in understanding the environment of this school and the conditions for teaching and learning.

To start the survey, please enter your username below.

Username: [ ] LOG IN
EDSCLS Reporting

- Includes reporting tool for providing
  - item-level frequencies
  - domain-level scores and topic-level sub-scores.
- Reporting tool can compare scores by school, grade level, race, and gender.
- Scores can be compared to national benchmarks.
### Subgroup Scale Score Reporting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Scale Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th grade</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th grade</td>
<td>502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th grade</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th grade</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not graded</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African-American</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
<td>†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>521</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Benchmark Development Schedule

March 2016: EDSCLS available for education agency download from OSHS.

March 2017: National benchmark data collection of 250 middle schools and 250 high schools.

Fall 2017: A revised school climate platform with national benchmark reporting available for education agency download from OSHS.
ED’s National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) is developing a suite of resources to help school district and school leaders analyze and understand local school climate survey data, as well as practical advice and information to support the implementation and sustainability of local school climate improvement efforts.

The first installment of these resources is the Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements.
GOALS OF THE SCIRP

1. Support states, districts, and schools in improving school climate via 5 sets of overarching activities.
2. Help interpret the EDSCLS data.
3. Provide strategies, resources and examples.
4. Online access to a range of resources that can help a variety of schools and districts.
WHAT INFORMED THE SCIRP?

- Latest research and practices in the field
- ED grantees that have used school climate survey data to make improvements
  - Range of approaches they took
  - Lessons learned
  - Successes
THE SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT PROCESS

- Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements
- Planning for School Climate Improvements
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions
CONTENTS OF THE SCIRP

2. Reference Manual
3. Action Guides for a Range of Stakeholders
4. Data Interpretation Guides
5. Online Modules
6. Customized List of SCIRP Items Based on an Assessment
7. Pointers for Improving School Climate Based on an Assessment
March 31, 2016: Release Quick Guide.


1. Reference Manual
2. Data Tools
3. Action Guides for stakeholders
4. Self Assessments

Fall 2016: Release online modules on a rolling basis.
THANK YOU

For additional information the ED’s school climate efforts, contact:

Joaquin Tamayo
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Joaquin.tamayo@ed.gov

Websites:
EDSCLS
https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls
SCIRP
https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about
AISD began monitoring student climate because district stakeholders were interested in factors contributing to student success beyond test scores.

- Research on academic achievement pointed to student climate as a strong predictor of student achievement.

- The AISD Student Climate Survey was first developed and administered to students in 2003-2004.
History of AISD’s Student Climate Survey

Subscales assessed on our survey:
Behavioral environment
Student engagement
Academic self-confidence
Adult fairness and respect
Teacher expectations
SEL skills
School connectedness
AISD’s Student Climate Survey

How you feel about your school is important. We will use your answers to help make your school a better place. Please fill in the bubble completely for the best answer to each sentence. Do not use check marks.

My school is: ______________________

I am a:  ○ Boy  ○ Girl  example: 1

I am in grade:  ○ 3  ○ 4  ○ 5  ○ 6  ○ 7  ○ 8  ○ 9  ○ 10  ○ 11  ○ 7

My school number is: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1. My classmates show respect to each other.
2. My classmates show respect to other students who are different.
3. I am happy with the way my classmates treat me.
4. Teachers at this school care about their students.
5. Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.
6. Adults at this school treat all students fairly.
7. The staff in the front office show respect to students.
8. It is easy for me to talk about my problems with the adults at my school.
9. I like to come to school.

A lot of the time  Sometimes  A little of the time  Never  ?  Don't know
Ongoing development

- Reliability analysis
- Factor analysis
- District need to measure specific constructs
- Translation
- In 2016-2017 most administration will be online
Survey timeline

- Fall/winter finalize items
- Spring administer the survey
- May/June post campus and district reports
Evidence indicates that positive school climate fosters a positive learning environment for students. Also, researchers have documented that a positive school climate helps students from economically disadvantaged schools to beat the odds (Voight, Austin, & Hanson, 2013). This report displays school climate ratings for the past four years, along with the 2016 ratings for all AISD schools at this level. New items were added in 2016 to assess students’ social and emotional (SEL) skills.

Survey Results
For each item in this report, the number displayed represents the percentage of students who agreed the statement is true a lot of the time or sometimes. Arrows indicate statistically meaningful changes from one year to the next. Items marked with * were not asked that year. To access reports from previous years, please visit the Department of Research and Evaluation’s (DRE) website.

Behavioral environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>All HS 2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My classmates show respect to each other.</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My classmates show respect to other students who are different.</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am happy with the way my classmates treat me.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at my school follow the school rules.</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel safe at my school.</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>95%↑</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at this school treat teachers with respect.</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to.</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Students’ ratings of school climate are positively related to student achievement
• At high poverty schools where students’ ratings of climate are also high, students perform better academically than do students from high poverty schools with lower ratings of climate
Research related to SEL

- Middle and high schools with higher SEL integration ratings had more favorable responses to bullying
- Elementary schools where peace areas were more integrated into classrooms had higher ratings of school safety
- Middle and high school students’ ratings of several items improved more at schools with greater longevity in SEL than at schools with less experience in SEL
Thank You!

DRE website: [https://www.austinisd.org/dre](https://www.austinisd.org/dre)
Student climate survey reports: [https://www.austinisd.org/dre/search?f[0]=im_field_survey_names%3A64](https://www.austinisd.org/dre/search?f[0]=im_field_survey_names%3A64)
SEL reports: [https://www.austinisd.org/dre/search/SEL](https://www.austinisd.org/dre/search/SEL)
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Monitoring and Improving School Climate With Student Surveys

Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Spotlight on ESSA Explained**
The Every Student Succeeds Act, the latest version of the nation's main K-12 law, has considerable ramifications for states, school districts, and educators. In this Spotlight, learn what ESSA's implementation will mean for teacher evaluation, early-childhood programs, literacy, and more.

**E-Book**
*Inside the Every Student Succeeds Act: The New Federal K-12 Law*
In this essential guide to the Every Student Succeeds Act, *Education Week* explains what the law will mean for: accountability and testing, teacher quality, early-childhood education, special education, academic standards including the common core, English-Language Learners, and teacher evaluation.