



Positive School Climate Assessment

This Positive School Climate Assessment can be used by district or school leaders, school leadership teams, or parent advocacy groups to conduct an assessment of the school's current efforts to maintain a positive school climate that is safe and welcoming for all students.

This Positive School Climate Assessment is based on the guidance provided in a new book, Engage Students to Embrace Civility. The approaches recommended in this assessment are thoroughly grounded in current research insight into positive, trauma-informed approaches to ensure a school climate that is safe and welcoming for all students.

SCHOOL CLIMATE PLANNING PROCESS THAT HAS A LIKELIHOOD OF SUCCESS

Does your school have a school leadership team that regularly develops or updates a plan of action to improve school climate? Does this process include the following steps?

- Needs assessment based on objective data from multiple sources
- Description of performance measures and rationale for the program or activity
- Implementation strategy
- Evidence to support a “substantial likelihood of success”
 - Description of the prevention research and principles the program has been based upon
 - Plan for evaluation of effectiveness

EFFECTIVE MEASUREMENT

Which of the following sources of data to engage in a needs assessment does your school (or district) currently use?

- Office Disciplinary Reports.
- District or school positive school climate survey.
- Focus groups of students.
- State student wellness or youth risk survey.
- Other:

AUTHORITARIAN TO ENGAGEMENT

On the spectrum from “authoritarian” approach to an “engagement” approach, how would you rank your school or district?

Note that the research is overwhelming that schools that function in an “engagement” manner have a more positive school climate.

TOKEN REWARDS

Does your school use a school-wide token rewards approach in conjunction with a behavior management program?

Has your school been able to implement the token rewards approach in a way that has not created what is in essence of two-tiered system, where students who come from stable families and who do not have disabilities are not more likely to receive rewards than students who come from less stable families or who have disabilities?

POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

What specific efforts has your school engaged in to ensure that every student has a specific positive connection with one or more staff members?

COMMUNITY CIRCLES

Do your students meet regularly (at least once a week) in Community Circles in their classroom or advisory/homeroom to allow for a discussion about the climate and matters of concern to the students?

SHARED VALUES

Are your students fully engaged in activities where they can work collaboratively with other students and staff to enunciate Shared Values of your school community?

CULTURAL INCLUSION

What is your school's action plan to ensure cultural inclusion of all students?

Does your approach to increase inclusion effectively address cultural background, race or ethnicity, religion, disabilities, sex or gender, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status?

COMPASSION, KINDNESS, AND GRATITUDE

Have you implemented an approach in your school to engage students in leadership activities to foster compassion, kindness, and gratitude?

POSITIVE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Do staff and students consistently acknowledge the positive behavior, efforts, and strategies of students?

Do your staff members specifically focus on students who are known to have greater challenges to ensure that their behavior, efforts, and strategies are acknowledged on an equivalent basis as students who have fewer challenges?

ACCOUNTABILITY

If students are hurtful or engage in misbehavior is a sufficiently adequate investigation conducted to identify what might have been causing or motivating the students to engage in such wrong-doing, what challenges this student may be dealing with, and what supports are necessary to assist this student in better responding to these challenges?

Has a standard intervention approach been implemented that engages the hurtful student in a process to acknowledge wrong-doing?

Has a standard intervention approach been implemented that engages this student in Problem Solving to develop a plan of action to remedy the harm to any individual harmed and to the school community?

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Does your school have a comprehensive strategy to integrate Social Emotional Learning?

MINDFULNESS

Has your school implemented daily school wide Mindfulness practices?

Has your special education program and counseling program implemented more comprehensive Mindfulness practices for students who have greater challenges or are known to have suffered trauma or toxic stress?

DE-ESCALATION OR SELF-REGULATION,

Have your staff and students received instruction in De-escalation or Self-Regulation strategies?

Has your school established a calming place where students can go if they need the opportunity to De-escalate or Self-Regulate?

STRENGTHS

What strategies are you using to focus on building students' strengths in balance with addressing challenges?

PROBLEM-SOLVING

Are you using a specific, planned approach to engage students and staff in effective Problem Solving, especially Problem Solving in the context of social relationship concerns?

Is this Problem Solving approach fully integrated into Community Circles, Interventions in Minor Hurtful Incidents, and the Accountability Process and Positive Action Plan approaches?

GOAL SETTING AND ACTION PLANNING

Are you using a specific, planned approach to engage students and staff in effective Goal Setting and Action Planning?

Do teachers engage students in a Goal Setting and Action Planning process on a weekly basis in class or advisory/homeroom?

AUTHENTIC STUDENT VOICE

Have you fully integrated authentic student voice in all aspects of planning and implementation activities to support positive school climate and foster positive relations?

Does your school regularly solicit student feedback, engage students in studying and assessing their school, include authentic student representation on leadership teams, invite students to any discussion related to their own learning, and consider young people as stakeholders and partners in their schools?

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

Have you identified kind, compassionate, inclusive students to serve in leadership capacity to foster positive school climate and positive relations?

Are you using older students to reach out to younger students to communicate the importance of kindness, compassion, and inclusion?

FOSTERING POSITIVE RELATIONS

Have you implemented an instructional program that provides insight to students on how to effectively respond to hurtful incidents as a witness, as the one who was hurtful, and as the one who was treated badly?

APPROACH TO SERIOUS OR PERSISTENT HURTFUL SITUATIONS

Does your school's standard approach to investigation and intervention in Serious or Persistent Hurtful Situations include the following?

- An investigation that is sufficient to identify all relevant participants, including any staff involvement or failure to respond and any students who were supporting the hurtful student, to ascertain any challenges being faced by any of the participants that may be contributing to the targeting of a student or why a student is being hurtful, and to ascertain whether any aspects of the school environment appear to be contributing to the hurtful situation or could be modified to increase inclusion.
- Efforts that are reasonable calculated to stop the hurtful behavior of any student who was hurtful by assisting that student in accepting personal responsibility for his or her actions and engaging that student in problem solving to develop a strategy to remedy the harm to the student who was treated badly and to the school community, and to avoid retaliation or any continuing harmful acts.
- Efforts that are reasonably calculated to stop any student from supporting the hurtful behavior of another student by assisting that student in accepting personal responsibility for his or her supportive actions and engaging that student in problem solving to develop a strategy to remedy the harm to the student who was treated badly and to the school community, and to avoid retaliation or any continuing harmful acts.
- Efforts to assist the student who was treated badly to overcome the harmful impact of these actions, to gain greater resilience and self-confidence in being able to effectively respond in the future if any student is hurtful to him or her, to increase this student's positive relationships, and to avoid the possibility this student ill engage in retaliation.
- Efforts to correct any aspects of the school environment that may be contributing to the existence of a hostile environment and to increase inclusion, including any necessary staff expectations and training.

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