

Connections Effective Schools Survey: Part II

School Climate

For Middle and High School Students and Staff

School Name: _____

_____ **I am a Student:** _____ Grade Level
_____ Male
_____ Female

_____ **I am a School Staff Member:** _____ Administrator
_____ Male
_____ Female
_____ Teacher
_____ Counselor
_____ Support Staff

About School Climate

"School Climate" refers to how it "feels" to be a student or staff member in the school.

"Schools with positive climates are places where people care, respect and trust one another; and where the school, as an institution, cares for, respects, and trusts people. In such a school, people feel a high sense of pride and ownership that comes from each individual having a role in making the school a better place."

Eugene Howard

Everyone has a number of *basic human needs*. These are needs that we are biologically hard-wired to fulfill. The more effectively a school can provide a climate that will help its students meet those needs in a positive way, the more it can help its students be successful, both academically and in their lives. The questions in this survey are grouped according to the basic need areas identified by Karen Pittman (Executive Director of the Forum for Youth Investment) in her research on positive youth development.

This survey gives you an opportunity to express your opinions about some aspects of the "climate" in your school. This survey includes a number of statements that will provide valuable information for future planning. Your responses are confidential. The results of this survey will be compiled into group responses, with no way to identify an individual's responses. The surveys are numbered to help us with data tracking. No connection will be made or attempted between your responses and your identity. We will protect your confidentiality.

Instructions for Completing this Survey

Please read each statement and think about which response you feel best describes the way things are in your school. If the behavior described in the statement rarely if ever happens that way, circle number "1" for "Not Typical." If it happens that way most of the time, circle number "5" for "Very Typical."

Not Typical		Somewhat Typical		Very Typical
1	2	3	4	5

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Safety and Structure: *Youth need to have a sense of personal safety and protection—both physically and emotionally.*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
1. The overall school atmosphere feels:					
a) Safe	1	2	3	4	5
b) Caring	1	2	3	4	5
2. When school staff have a conflict or behavioral problem with a student, they are:					
a) Calm	1	2	3	4	5
b) Respectful	1	2	3	4	5
3. Students resolve their disputes:					
a) Respectfully	1	2	3	4	5
b) Peacefully	1	2	3	4	5
4. School staff use discipline strategies that promote positive change when there is a behavior problem with a student.	1	2	3	4	5
5. The present discipline system seems fair (not too harsh or too lenient).	1	2	3	4	5
6. Standards for student behavior are clearly communicated to:					
a) Students	1	2	3	4	5
b) Parents	1	2	3	4	5
c) Staff	1	2	3	4	5
7. When the disciplinary code is violated, consequences are enforced consistently for all students.	1	2	3	4	5
8. School staff members help students take responsibility for their behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Adults help make sure that students don't get bullied or harassed.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Students having problems in the following areas are quickly given support services:					
a) Academic problems	1	2	3	4	5
b) Emotional or behavioral problems (for example, chemical use, aggression, depression, stress)	1	2	3	4	5

Belonging and Group Membership: *Youth need to feel they are valued members of a group; they have a sense of belonging in the school.*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
11. Student concerns are taken seriously by school staff.	1	2	3	4	5
12. School is a place where students feel they fit in and "belong."	1	2	3	4	5
13. There are opportunities for all students who want to participate in extra-curricular/leadership activities.	1	2	3	4	5

Self-Worth and Ability to Contribute: *Youth need to have a sense of their worth and have opportunities to make meaningful contributions—with their peers, adults, and in their school.*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
14. Staff believe all students can be successful in school.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Students are acknowledged for their success and contributions in many different arenas (for example, academic, service/helping, leadership, talent).	1	2	3	4	5
16. School staff listen to student ideas and suggestions.	1	2	3	4	5
17. Students have opportunities to help others (for example, mentoring, tutoring, community service, peer helping, service learning, mediation) in their:					
a) School	1	2	3	4	5
b) Community	1	2	3	4	5

Independence and Control: *Youth need to feel they can make some decisions and have some control over their lives.*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
18. Students participate in making school an inviting place to be (for example, planning displays, painting murals, contributing art work, planting gardens).	1	2	3	4	5
19. Students are given choices regarding learning activities (for example, choice of topic or choice between writing a paper and doing a project, working alone or in a group).	1	2	3	4	5
20. Students have opportunities to participate in decisions about school issues that affect them (for example, discipline policy, extra-curricular activities, leadership).	1	2	3	4	5

Closeness and Good Relationships: *Youth need to experience closeness to other people—relationships that are based upon respect, caring, honesty, and trust.*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
21. All students are treated with <i>respect</i> by:					
a) Peers	1	2	3	4	5
b) Staff	1	2	3	4	5
22. School staff encourage respect for diversity of all kinds.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Students and staff spend time together outside of academic time in the classrooms (for example, informal activities or conversations, extra-curricular activities).	1	2	3	4	5
24. Students and staff enjoy each other's company.	1	2	3	4	5
25. Every student has at least one adult in school with whom he /she has a "special connection"—a person that student would feel comfortable talking to about problems or asking for help.	1	2	3	4	5

Competency and Mastery: *Youth need to develop attitudes, behaviors, and skills in a number of core areas in order to be successful as adults (including social and coping skills as well as academic abilities).*

	Not Typical	Somewhat Typical	Very Typical		
26. Students are taught and encouraged to use effective social, conflict resolution, and coping skills including:					
a) Respecting diversity (race, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, special needs)	1	2	3	4	5
b) Behaving according to a core set of ethics (character education)	1	2	3	4	5
c) Managing anger	1	2	3	4	5
d) Communicating effectively	1	2	3	4	5
e) Managing stress	1	2	3	4	5
f) Solving personal problems	1	2	3	4	5
g) Resolving conflicts with others	1	2	3	4	5
27. Because teachers know that students learn in different ways, they use lots of different strategies (including active student participation) when they teach that help make learning interesting and fun.	1	2	3	4	5
28. Teachers and administrators show that they have high expectations that <i>all</i> students can be successful learners by the way they talk and act with students.	1	2	3	4	5

Not Typical Somewhat Typical Very Typical

29. When students are having trouble with a subject, staff are quick to find a way to help them (for example, spending extra time with them, arranging for tutoring, etc.).
- 1 2 3 4 5
30. My overall stress level in school is *low* (i.e., there is *little* feeling of threat, frustration, and/or anxiety that decreases students' ability to learn and teachers' ability to teach).
- 1 2 3 4 5

Conclusion: Please respond to the following open ended questions.

31. Please look back over the questions in this survey and select up to five that you feel need the most improvement in your school. Record the number of each question below and write any comments you have about your choices in the space below:

32. Did we miss something you feel is important that would help improve your school's climate?

33. Is there something especially positive about your school climate you would like to note?

34. Is there anything that has recently happened in your school or community that might be affecting your responses in this survey regarding school climate (for example, a death or other traumatic event, cuts in programs or services, contract changes in school staff)? If yes, please explain.

If you are a student, please respond to the following final questions.

35. Which best describes your current status regarding school suspension?

- _____ I have never been suspended at this school.
_____ I have been suspended at this school, but not currently.
_____ I am currently serving an in-school suspension.
_____ I am currently serving a suspension at another school location.

36. Which best describes your current status regarding school expulsion?

- _____ I have never been expelled from school.
_____ I have been expelled from school, but not currently.
_____ I am currently expelled and attending a program at another school.