Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

The first activity set (Planning for School Climate Improvements) provides activities on how to develop plans to roll out activities to improve your school climate. Those plans include identifying stakeholders, as well as developing communication and training materials for stakeholders. Activity Set 2: Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements, provides activities on how to implement those plans and engage stakeholders—district or CMO/EMO leaders, governing board members, school leaders, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, students, families, and community partners—in improving school climate.

This activity set is composed of two action steps: (1) engage staff, families, students, and community to roll out initiatives and (2) evaluate and refine engagement efforts with stakeholders and continue planning for improvement and sustainability. Throughout the objectives within this activity set, engage stakeholders to reinforce the expectations of the process. This includes how they will participate, how their input will be incorporated, and the anticipated outcomes. When communicating with stakeholders, emphasize that school climate improvements are a continuous process, not a one-off initiative. Reinforce that these efforts involve the development of practices and routines to ensure school climate practices are implemented over the long run. This process is more effective when stakeholders receive necessary training and support (e.g., professional development), communication strategies maximize access to information, and school climate efforts are connected with other efforts the stakeholders are involved in (such as PBIS, trauma-sensitive approaches, efforts to reduce racial disparities, and social and emotional learning).

When stakeholders buy in to the efforts, they are more likely to fully engage in school climate practices, trust the data collection process described in Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data (Activity Set 3), and implement the selected interventions with fidelity in Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (Activity Set 4).

**ACTION STEP 1. Engage Staff, Families, Students, and the Community to Roll Out Initiative**

- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.1:** Develop messaging to stakeholders on school climate improvement efforts
- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.2:** Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input
- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.3:** Develop school-level climate team(s)
- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.4:** Conduct orientation activities for all school personnel
- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.5:** Conduct orientation activities for students
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Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)

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Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.6**: Conduct orientation activities for family and community stakeholders
- **Objective 2.1.7**: Develop guidance for stakeholders on the role of data in selecting intervention(s)
- **OBJECTIVE 2.1.8**: Effectively form family-school partnerships

**ACTION STEP 2. Evaluate and Refine Engagement Efforts With Stakeholders and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability**

- **OBJECTIVE 2.2.1**: Review stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability

**District or State Example of Engaging Stakeholders Activity Set**

**Engage Staff, Families, Students, and the Community to Roll Out Initiative (Activity Set 2, Action Step 1 [2.1])**

Although the Planning Activity Set provides strategies to engage select stakeholders (key leadership and core planning team), this activity set provides strategies to ensure that all members of your school community are invested and engaged in the school climate improvement efforts. While you engage your stakeholders, make sure to leverage the work accomplished during the Planning Activity Set. *Specifically, pay attention to your communication and dissemination plans to inform your stakeholders about the efforts, as well as your theory of action to engage them in the identified school climate practices.* A crucial part of engagement involves obtaining and incorporating stakeholder input because school climate efforts are something done *with* stakeholders, not to them.

**STAKEHOLDERS DEFINED**

Stakeholders are those individuals who have a stake in the school. These are the individuals who you want support from to provide a positive school experience for your students. As such, most people have a stake in schools—and are thus stakeholders—but have a different role to play in schools. For example, you have staff who have a direct responsibility in creating the conditions necessary for students to learn and thrive, and you have business leaders who have a stake in the development of a well-prepared workforce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>District level</strong></th>
<th><strong>School level</strong></th>
<th><strong>Community partners</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District superintendent, other administrators, staff, school boards</td>
<td>Principal, other administrators</td>
<td>Youth service groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMO/EMO</td>
<td>Instructional staff</td>
<td>Mental health organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter operators, executive director/CEOs, other administrators, staff, charter authorizers</td>
<td>Noninstructional staff (counselors; administrative, custodial, food service staff; school bus drivers; others)</td>
<td>Other community-based organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Families (parents/guardians)</td>
<td>Community members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For districts or CMOs/EMOs, work with participating schools to determine the outreach and engagement strategies needed to create a consistent message to stakeholders.

For districts or CMOs/EMOs that have only a subgroup of schools participating, disseminate information about the school climate efforts to all schools in the district/CMO/EMO to inform them of the work being done and offer potential strategies for other schools to implement school climate efforts.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1.1: Develop messaging to stakeholders on school climate improvement efforts**

**Purpose of developing messaging to schools**

Developing effective messaging to stakeholders sets the stage for the remaining goals and strategies within this activity set. Prior to the initiative taking off, identify your stakeholders and stakeholder groups to determine why school climate improvement is important for every member of your school community.

After you identify your stakeholder groups, craft messaging that targets each stakeholder group. The messaging should include what school climate is, why it is important for them, what will be done during the improvement process, and how their input will be used in the process. The messaging *also should emphasize that activities to improve school climate are not fixed in one point in time—they are something that you will put into practice on an ongoing basis.* It is not about getting “done” but about improving school climate and conditions for learning to improve student outcomes. As you begin your messaging, consider the multiple types of individuals who should be involved—including district or CMO/EMO leaders, charter authorizers, governing board members, school leaders, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, students, families, or community partners—who would be good partners, ensuring that the stakeholders reflect the diversity of your community. Consider those who will actively and constructively engage in the process, as well as those stakeholders who might be more difficult to obtain buy-in from. For each stakeholder you are communicating with, provide a consistent message across your district or school(s) to ensure stakeholders have a clearer understanding of the importance of the efforts, as well as their role in the process.

**Strategies for developing messaging to schools**

1. Develop communication materials that you can send to stakeholders about the importance of school climate and upcoming events and orientation sessions about the improvement efforts.

2. Develop a website, electronic mailing lists, and a social media presence focused on school climate.

**2.1.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS**

- Communication documents (e.g., flyers or newsletters) to introduce importance of effort
- Events and orientation session materials
- Website dedicated to school climate
- Social media posts that describe the school climate improvement process
c. Employ social marketing strategies to maximize the effectiveness of your communication efforts.

d. Make connections to school climate in various outlets, including sections in newsletters, standing agenda items on staff meetings, parent teacher association (PTA) meetings, and morning announcements.

e. Ensure that you and your core planning team have developed a common vision for school climate, which incorporated stakeholder input.

f. Revisit the communications plans you developed in Activity Set 1: Planning for School Climate Improvements.

Related resources for developing messaging to schools

- **School Climate Improvement Online Module 2: Engaging Staff, Students, and Families in School Climate Issues** (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments [NCSSLE])
  - This online module provides an activity that allows you to practice engaging a variety of stakeholders.

- **Reporting and Dissemination** (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar covers ways to align results with outcome data and properly disseminate those data to the appropriate audiences in the appropriate medium. Data can then be used to drive the selection of new interventions that will meet the needs of the school.

- **Creating Champions for Sustainability Through Social Marketing and Communications** (ICF International)
  - This resource provides strategies for how to communicate data to various audiences to gain continued buy-in from stakeholders for the school climate improvements.

Related resources from the field

- **S3 Grantee Websites**
  - Here are some examples of school climate websites created by S3 grantees.
    - Arizona
    - California
    - Kansas
    - Louisiana
    - Maryland
    - Tennessee
    - Wisconsin
OBJECTIVE 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input

Purpose of developing a shared understanding among stakeholders

To successfully improve school climate, there must be a shared understanding among all members of your school about the dimensions of and effective practices in improving school climate. Through Objective 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate,” the core planning team should begin to develop a definition of school climate. Through this objective, the core planning team should provide opportunities for stakeholders to provide feedback and input into the vision and mission. Furthermore, the team should let stakeholders know that they play a key role in promoting a positive school climate (e.g., by ensuring fidelity of approach and implementation of efforts). To help stakeholders develop a shared understanding, provide an opportunity for stakeholders to understand the research and theory behind school climate and conditions for learning, as well as discuss the benefits of participation. Strategies found within Objectives 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6 describe orientation activities for staff, students, families, and community members, respectively. Creating a shared definition, and understanding the expectations of the efforts across stakeholders, will emphasize to all members of the school community that school climate improvements are a coordinated effort.

It is important for districts and CMOs/EMOs providing orientation activities to their schools to specify their own role and differentiate it from the role that schools will take in implementing the effort.

Strategies for developing a shared understanding among stakeholders

a. Provide multiple opportunities (e.g., meetings and forums) and modalities for stakeholders to learn about and begin to engage in the process. Emphasize that you want everyone to engage and that everyone is a stakeholder in some way.

b. Plan orientation sessions that allow stakeholders to review and discuss suggested resource(s).

c. Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to give input on the vision, mission, and plans for the overall effort.

d. Target communication efforts using social marketing strategies.

e. Allow time for individuals to reflect on the information and provide multiple opportunities to ask questions and share feedback through online forums and social media to help refine efforts.

2.1.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Materials for meetings or other forums to facilitate discussion, including documents that provide an overview of the school climate initiative and school climate dimensions and effective practices; synthesize information garnered from meetings and other forums

- Materials for staff development opportunities (see related resources for developing a shared understanding among stakeholders)
f. Facilitate communities of practice\textsuperscript{16} for discussion and reflection (also see the Strategies section in Objectives 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6 for specific activities recommended for staff, students, and families and community organizations, respectively).

g. Synthesize, integrate, and share the information garnered from stakeholders through meetings and online forums to the broader community.

h. Apply the information garnered from stakeholders to the school climate efforts.

i. Provide members of the school community with ongoing supports so that they can develop a deep understanding and master how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments (e.g., social and emotional learning and professional learning communities).

j. Ensure all members of the school community are invested in making school climate improvements.

Related resources for developing a shared understanding among stakeholders

- **Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement in Turnaround Schools** (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This resource presents research-based evidence that connects school climate to student outcomes, information on how to integrate school climate into schools, strategies to communicate the importance of school climate to stakeholders, and the importance of quality school climate surveys.

- **School Climate Guide for District Policymakers and Educational Leaders** (National School Climate Center)
  - This guide includes strategies that district policymakers and education leaders can use to help ensure that district and school policies are supportive of a positive school climate.

- **Engaging School Administrators** (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
  - This guide presents strategies to gain the support of principals and superintendents for Safe Schools and Healthy Students grantees but can be applied to any school climate improvement initiative.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1.3: Develop school-level climate team(s)**

**Purpose of developing school-level climate team(s)**

School-level climate teams can lead and manage the initiative at the school level. A team can be composed of local education agency/school leadership, student support personnel, teaching staff representatives, school climate specialists/coaches, students, and families. Depending on the size of the school, the school climate team may be embedded within other existing teams (e.g., school leadership team, data support team, or discipline team), or it may be a new team developed

\textsuperscript{16} Communities of practice are groups of people who have similar roles or work that come together to share and learn from each other. A group of stakeholders motivated to make school climate improvements can come together as a community of practice to brainstorm ideas, problem-solve issues, and connect with resources and experts as they work on making school climate improvements.
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Strategies for developing school-level climate team(s)

a. Use an existing school team or establish a new team, depending on the current organizational structure.

b. Select a school climate leadership team that has a diverse skill set (e.g., identify one or more individuals representing these five key assets: knowledge, perspective, technical skills, personal skills, and legitimacy) and represents the diversity of the school community.

c. Select a team member with deep institutional knowledge of your district, CMO/EMO, or school.

d. Be explicit in your expectations and activities that are required of the school climate team (e.g., make sure your team is aware of potential activities, which may include hiring).

e. Actively engage student and family voices in your school climate team.

f. For additional strategies on forming a school-based team, see Objective 1.1.2: Form a core planning team.

g. Districts and CMOs/EMOs with multiple participating schools can identify and assign school climate coaches to specific schools to provide individualized support; coaches should stay with their assigned school(s) throughout all stages of the effort, if possible.

Related resources for developing school-level climate team(s)

- School Based Climate Teams: Part 1 and Part 2 (NCSSLE Webinars)
  - These webinars present how to build school-based climate teams. Part 1 focuses on management and design of multi-tiered internal structures and processes that positively

2.1.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document that establishes the school climate team(s), including roles of the members (e.g., chairperson, secretary, communications director, as well as student and family members); a list of the diverse skills and perspectives that team members represent; and the responsibilities of and expectations for the team
  - List of the main points of contact for each school
  - List of school climate specialists and coaches assigned to schools

WHEN TO DEVELOP SCHOOL-LEVEL TEAMS

Individual schools that are leading the initiative may have already created their school climate teams in Planning for School Climate Improvements (Activity Set 1) as part of the Core Planning Team.

Those schools participating in districtwide initiatives may find that forming their local school-level climate team is more efficient during this set of activities.
impact student's achievement, such as referrals, triage, support systems, interventions, and routine review of student progress. Part 2 focuses on how to enhance, strengthen, and sustain your school climate team’s efforts.

- **Safe, Supportive, and Successful Schools Step by Step** (American Institutes for Research)
  - This book, particularly Chapter 1, describes the early steps for starting school climate change planning, including building a team and defining roles of team members.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1.4: Conduct orientation activities for all school personnel**

**Purpose of conducting orientation activities for all school personnel**

Orientation activities offer you a chance to engage school personnel in the importance of school climate and what you are doing to make improvements. To accomplish this task, extend the work you conducted to complete **Objective 2.1.2: Develop shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input**. In these orientation sessions, you and your leadership team will disseminate information about the importance of school climate, invite interest and support for the effort, explain expectations, and begin formulating key relationships. Be sure to include all of your school personnel, not just instructional staff, because all school staff contribute to the climate of the school. Furthermore, school climate efforts are enhanced when all staff are “speaking the same language” and share the same expectations about supporting a positive climate.

**Strategies for conducting orientation activities for all school personnel**

a. Explain the background of the efforts, how leadership estimated readiness to launch it, and how it fits into other administrative or programmatic efforts.

b. Be explicit about how all school staff contribute to the process, explaining how administrative staff, cafeteria workers, security guards, school bus drivers, and others fit into activities to improve school climate.

c. Define expectations for activities moving forward and connect the activities to anticipated outcomes. (See **Objective 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators [or “theory of action”] to guide this discussion.**)

d. Encourage teacher and staff voices throughout the process.

e. Have leadership, school climate coaches, and others from the school present the orientation event to their fellow staff members.

f. Employ social marketing techniques to ensure participation.

g. Provide evaluations of the orientation session to get feedback on the process.
Related resources for conducting orientation activities for all school personnel

- **Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement in Turnaround Schools** (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar presents research-based evidence that school climate is connected to student outcomes, how to integrate school climate into schools, strategies to communicate the importance of school climate to stakeholders, and the importance of quality school climate surveys.

- **Enhancing Peer-to-Peer Relationships to Strengthen School Climate** (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar presents the role that positive peer-to-peer relationships play in school climate and effective practices for how adults can model and nurture healthy and respectful relationships among students on campus.

- **Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment on Our Nation’s School Buses** (NCSSLE)
  - This training includes a series of presentations and related online training modules for creating a safe and respectful environment on school buses. Included in the training is an overview of Safe and Supportive School Environments, a survey-based summary of school bus driver needs, a training module series on preventing and addressing bullying on the bus, and an action plan to incorporate training at your school.

- **Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation’s Classrooms** (NCSSLE)
  - This training toolkit includes two modules for trainers to assist teachers in creating positive school climate in classrooms to reduce incidents of bullying, through cultivating meaningful relationships and building skills to identify and intervene in bullying situations.

Related resources from the field

- **California—S3 Coordinator Quick-Start Guide**
  - This guide describes objectives and outcomes for the California S3 Program, duties of each member of the school climate team, and general project management guidance.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1.5: Conduct orientation activities for students**

**Purpose of conducting orientation activities for students**

Conducting orientation activities for students extends the work on developing a shared understanding through **Objective 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input.** In these orientation sessions, you and your leadership team explain the concept and importance of school climate and invite students to be part of positive change. Explain explicitly what their role will be in the effort and potential results through participation. Examples of ways that students can actively participate in the process include reviewing students’ perceptions of the climate in their school, as reported by survey data; designing and administering additional surveys to fellow students; exhibiting positive social interactions and other tenets of positive school climate; participating in restorative justice panels and safety patrol; speaking up and reporting bullying.
incidents; and active engagement activities such as student fishbowls, a teaching strategy that gives students opportunities to contribute and listen during a discussion. In addition, ensure that students have a voice throughout the school climate improvement process (e.g., student representation on leadership team, student council, and student focus groups). Providing students with multiple avenues to participate and following through with plans can help establish trust with students, allowing for continued engagement in climate improvement activities. In addition, when students feel that they have a say and that their concerns are heard, they will be more apt to be engaged in the process and respond to surveys seriously.

**Strategies for conducting orientation activities for students**

a. Use youth-driven and youth development approaches (e.g., letters to the staff for elementary students or student council for middle and high school students).

b. Develop student understanding about how a positive school climate affects learning and the overall school experience.

c. Include student leaders in developing and presenting the orientation session(s); use the presentation as an opportunity to model the behaviors you want to promote.

d. Provide concrete explanations that are meaningful and relevant to students.

e. Allow plenty of time for questions and answers and invite feedback; assure students that their concerns and suggestions matter and will be taken into account.

f. Engage students in helping define expectations for student behavior; propose that students in older grades help analyze school climate data or design additional data collection(s).

g. Assist students in developing strategies for dissemination to their peers.

h. Provide evaluations of the orientation session to give feedback on the process.

**Related resources for conducting orientation activities for students**

- **Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement in Turnaround Schools** (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar presents research-based evidence that school climate is connected to student outcomes, how to integrate school climate into schools, strategies to communicate the importance of school climate to stakeholders, and the importance of quality school climate surveys.
Enhancing Peer-to-Peer Relationships to Strengthen School Climate (NCSSLE Webinar)
- This webinar presents the role that positive peer-to-peer relationships play in school climate and effective practices for how adults can model and nurture healthy and respectful relationships among students on campus.

Student Fishbowl Activity
- This student activity is useful for facilitating a discussion about school climate and overall school experiences.

Developing and Sustaining a Youth Advisory Council (Building Bridges Initiative)
- This tip sheet outlines student roles and responsibilities, the value to students and the school climate improvement effort, and how to start and sustain a youth advisory council.

Related resources from the field
- Innovation Spotlights (S3)
  - These spotlights present examples of programs, strategies, and activities that yielded success during S3 grantee school climate improvement efforts.
    - Youth Engagement in California
      - This example from California demonstrates how the fishbowl activity could work to engage students in school climate and shows a school’s success with this activity.
    - Youth Engagement in Iowa
      - This example from Iowa demonstrates how the use of Youth Leadership Teams was an effective strategy for engaging students in the school climate improvement process and for capturing their voice.
    - Youth Engagement in Michigan
      - This example from Michigan describes how a three-day institute with student teams can kick-start students’ understanding of school climate and the role they can play in improving it. It also functioned to establish Youth Leadership Teams.

- California—Opportunities for Meaningful Participation in School (S3)
  - This fact sheet contains a literature review on the relationship between meaningful participation in school, student wellness, and school climate. The review is supported by California’s own study of meaningful participation in its schools and its impact on students.

- Maryland—Student Voice in High Schools—A Critical Component in the Change (S3)
  - This presentation provides insight into the important role of student voice in high schools and in climate change.

OBJECTIVE 2.1.6: Conduct orientation activities for family and community stakeholders

Purpose of conducting orientation activities for family and community stakeholders

Drawing on the work you could do/have done to develop a shared understanding of school climate through Objective 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain
stakeholder input, conduct orientation activities with families, family organizations (e.g., parent-teacher organization [PTO] or PTA), youth service organizations, mental health agencies, and other community stakeholders. In these orientation sessions, you and your leadership team can articulate how school climate relates to student outcomes and how family and community investment in activities to improve school climate can increase the chances for success. In addition, explain the importance of family and community engagement in promoting a positive school climate and the benefits of participation. In these sessions, provide family and community members with opportunities to become involved in the school as well as help create structures that will allow family and community member voice within the school. In addition, identify ways to leverage the skills and expertise of families and community members to improve the quality of school climate and the classroom environment.

Strategies for conducting orientation activities for family and community stakeholders

a. Create or enhance communication with all families about the importance of school climate; describe related activities the district or school is conducting (including encouraging families to complete school climate surveys); and provide options for engaging in the effort (including contact information).

b. Develop a strategy to bring representative family and community stakeholders to orientation session(s) and make personal contact to extend invitations; ensure that you reach out beyond just PTO/PTA families to become engaged.

c. Invite all family and community members whose participation will be necessary to implement the effort.

d. Use a multi-tiered approach to family engagement.

e. Create systems and structures with families and community members that will provide them more voice and input in the school climate process on an ongoing basis (e.g., town hall meetings in neighborhood schools).

f. Provide evaluations of the orientation session(s) to provide feedback on the process.

g. Provide ongoing training to help families and community members express their ideas.

Related resources for conducting orientation activities with family and community stakeholders

- Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement in Turnaround Schools (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar presents research-based evidence that school climate is connected to student outcomes, examples of how to integrate school climate into schools, strategies
Objective 2.1.7: Develop guidance for stakeholders on the role of data in selecting intervention(s)

Purpose of developing guidance for stakeholders on the role of data in selecting intervention(s)

A key aspect of engaging stakeholders includes providing stakeholders information on how to use school climate—for example, information on how the surveys assess various school climate topic areas, information on how to use data to identify needs and gaps, and information on how to choose interventions to improve school climate (see Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions). Furthermore, inform stakeholders about how you plan to collect, analyze, and report data in a recurring cycle to determine whether the interventions are resulting in the intended effects.

Stakeholders may not be familiar with such a data collection process, have doubts about its effectiveness, or resist the time commitment involved. Charter school governing board members

- Moving Beyond Open House: Building Meaningful Relationships Between Parents/Families and Schools (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar discusses parent and family engagement, how students and schools benefit from their engagement, and strategies that schools can use to encourage higher levels of engagement. In this webinar, Joyce Epstein, family involvement expert from Johns Hopkins University, presents her extensive work on parent and family engagement, including her Framework of Six Types of Involvement.

- Increasing Staff & and Family Survey Response Rates (NCSSLE Webinar)
  - This webinar provided practical tips for engaging families, staff, and special populations in school climate efforts and increasing the survey response rates from these respondents.

- Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships (SEDL/American Institutes for Research)
  - This framework presents the added benefit and value-added of family-school partnerships, suggested goals and outcomes, three case studies, and recommendations for schools seeking to increase family engagement.

Related resources from the field

- Michigan—Parent Engagement Resources
  - This webpage offers tips, effective practices, guidance, templates, activities, and parent survey instruments to assist in a comprehensive parent engagement initiative.

- Colorado—Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Districts and Schools
  - This toolkit from the Colorado Education Initiative provides tips for communicating results, including sample summary you could give to families (pages 15–16).
new to the field of education may especially benefit from guidance on the role of school climate data in programmatic and resource allocation decision making. Thus, it can be helpful to take these potential challenges into account upfront and include proposed solutions in the information you develop (e.g., reports showing positive links among school climate, achievement, and other positive student and teacher outcomes). Note that in Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data (Activity Set 3), the Reference Manual provides strategies on how you collect, analyze, and report school climate data, and in Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (Activity Set 4), the Reference Manual provides strategies on how you use that data to choose and implement interventions.

Strategies for developing guidance for stakeholders on reviewing the role of data in selecting intervention(s)

a. Convene meetings of students, teaching staff, support staff, administrative staff, families, governing board members, and community representatives in a variety of formats (e.g., advisory board, committees, and focus groups) to provide guidance on the importance of collecting school climate data when implementing an evidence-based approach to school climate improvement. (See Objective 3.3.1: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings.)

b. Ensure stakeholders receive information about the data collection process (e.g., who will participate in the process and participants’ duties).

c. Provide information on how school climate data can be used to help determine which interventions to implement. (See Objective 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data.)

d. Develop a framework for collaborating with stakeholders to develop (1) a clear plan of action to use data to improve school climate and (2) a plan for how stakeholders’ voices will be heard during the data collection and intervention implementation processes.

Related resources for developing guidance for stakeholders on the role of data in selecting intervention(s)

- School Climate Improvement Online Module 2: Engaging Staff, Students, and Families in School Climate Issues (NCSSLE)
  - This online module provides an activity that allows you to practice engaging a variety of stakeholders.
OBJECTIVE 2.1.8: Effectively form family-school partnerships

Purpose of effectively forming family-school partnerships

Families often are underutilized but critical stakeholders in school climate improvements and the development of a multi-tiered system of supports. Creating meaningful, bi-directional, and culturally
competent and respectful relationships between families and schools allows for many types of family involvement, contributes to improved school climate, and improves student academic and developmental outcomes. Partnerships between families and schools can evolve, grow, and develop across time as you regularly evaluate your efforts and adapt efforts based on your evaluations. Your integration of family partnerships into schools should be a systematic and organized effort focused on student outcomes, with the goal of improving school climate.

**Strategies for effectively forming family-school partnerships**

a. Engage district/CMO/EMO and school leaders in improving family-school partnerships, especially districts/CMOs/EMOs, to increase the likelihood of sustainability.

b. Create an Action Team for Partnerships within your school climate team, consisting of teachers, family members, other school staff, and students (at the high school level) to specifically focus on family engagement. (See Objective 1.1.2: Form a core planning team.)

c. Collect information from families, teachers, and staff about preferred methods of communicating with one another.

d. Evaluate areas of strength and challenge in the family-school partnership as the school climate efforts progress.

e. Provide a variety of ways that families can participate in supporting their children and their children’s school (see Joyce Epstein’s *Six Types of Involvement* work for examples and ideas).

f. Develop universal, selective, and targeted approaches that schools can use to reach out to families.

g. Districts/CMOs/EMOs can ensure that families are aware of school climate improvements, align district/CMO/EMO family-school partnership programs and policies with school climate efforts, provide guidance to schools and families for program development, and celebrate and document progress and outcomes.

**Related resources for utilizing effective strategies for forming family-school partnerships**

- **Community and Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works** (Coalition for Community Schools)
  - This Coalition for Community Schools (supported by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals) document provides keys to community engagement and engaging stakeholders.

**2.1.8 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS**

- Bi-directional and accessible avenues of communication between schools and families based on family feedback and input
- List of community partners that can help link schools and families
- A family engagement policy, an Action Team for Partnerships, and identified family liaisons
Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

Evaluate and Refine Engagement Efforts With Stakeholders and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 2, ACTION STEP 2 [2.2])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practice. This approach will help you not only improve your efforts with each cycle of implementation but also sustain the structures and processes within the activity set. At the end of Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (Activity Set 2), reflect on the level of stakeholder involvement to date, including the communication strategies you have used. When reviewing stakeholder engagement, look across stakeholder characteristics to see which groups
may be more invested and involved and which may need more encouragement to engage in activities to improve school climate.

**OBJECTIVE 2.2.1: Review stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability**

**Purpose of reviewing stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability**

When you review your stakeholder engagement, reflect on some key questions about the level of engagement with the process thus far. Possible questions are as follows: How receptive were various stakeholders during orientation activities? What level of buy-in have you gained from stakeholders? Do they have a clear vision of the school climate improvements? How have you incorporated their feedback into your current plans? How can you improve your stakeholder engagement? Are there subgroups of stakeholders who are more engaged than others; should you step up efforts with those less engaged? Have you identified individuals within each stakeholder group who are school climate “champions” that you can count on in your sustainability efforts? Questions like these will help guide how you reflect on this set of activities, review accomplishments thus far in the process, and refine your efforts going forward. A large part of stakeholder engagement is composed of your communication infrastructure. Thus, take stock of which communication strategies (e.g., blog posts, website updates, or newsletters) appear to be the most effective at disseminating information about school climate.

**Districts/CMOs/EMOs in which only a sample of schools is participating can start preparing for later scaling up efforts by disseminating information about the initiative to their entire district/CMO/EMO. Districts also can provide a forum for disseminating any lessons learned that other schools can use to improve their school climate.**

**Strategies for reviewing stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability**

a. Review the attendance records of your orientation sessions across orientation groups; if representative members of stakeholder subgroups are not attending, decide to refine or step up engagement efforts.

b. Identify potential school climate “champions” within each stakeholder group.

c. Review evaluations of your orientation session(s).

d. Conduct informal focus groups with a variety of stakeholders to determine their level of buy-in to the school climate improvement process.

e. Conduct informal surveys with a variety of stakeholders to determine if certain communication strategies are particularly effective.

**2.2.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS**

- Document outlining the strengths and areas of challenge in engaging stakeholders
- Document outlining action steps to improve stakeholder engagement efforts
- Updated communication infrastructure
- Updated stakeholder engagement plan
- List of potential school climate champions from each stakeholder group
Related resources for reviewing stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability

- **Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide** (Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health)
  - This resource outlines the process of creating sustainable programs that support adolescent health and well-being, including how to measure success, promote community support and integration, build a leadership team, create strategic partnerships, and secure financial backing. Each step is broken down into objectives, importance, action, and worksheets.

- **School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability** (National School Climate Center)
  - This practice brief provides information about school climate standards, research, measurement, and analysis, plus key topic areas such as moral and social development, inclusion, dropout prevention, and so on.

- **School Climate Guide for District Policymakers and Education Leaders** (National School Climate Center)
  - This guide includes strategies that district policymakers and education leaders can use to help ensure that district and school policies are supportive of a positive school climate.

- **Creating Champions for Sustainability Through Social Marketing and Communications** (ICF International)
  - This resource provides strategies for how to communicate data to various audiences to gain continued buy-in from stakeholders for the school climate improvement process.

- **2011 Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools National Conference Communicating for Success**
  - The following presentations describe how to turn school climate data into the stories the data tell about a school to create buy-in and invigorate stakeholders.
    - Communicating School Climate Data
    - Communicating for Success: Using Data-Driven Stories to Move Audiences to Action

**District or State Example of Engaging Stakeholders Activity Set**

**Michigan**

Michigan kicked off its school climate work in June 2011 at what was to become their biannual “Create the Change” S3 conference for school staff. Topics included a grant overview; coaches and Michigan Department of Education state staff coordinator roles; and information on data-driven decision making, coordinated school health, and school action planning. To orient students, an annual two-day summer Student Engagement Institute was launched in 2013. At this event, students were trained on how to establish and manage Youth Advisory Councils in their buildings. Three cohorts participated in these trainings during three summers and then received ongoing on-site coaching and technical assistance.
Family and community partnerships were developed and promoted in Michigan through the distribution of school newsletters; public relations materials; and Parent Postcards, a resource used to build parent-school relationships, especially for parents of students struggling academically. Traditionally, contacts to homes are made to report poor performance or behavior. However, this postcard was used to share positive news, invite the parents to conferences, or share an improvement. Also, Michigan used a parent engagement consultant to conduct parent focus groups. Information gathered from those sessions was used to plan more responsive approaches to engaging families. Numerous professional development opportunities events also were offered on parent engagement, including a round-robin session titled *The Hard Work and Heart Work of Family & Community Engagement*. Conferences and workshops also were offered for parents, including the *Talk Early & Talk Often Parent Connection Conference* (statewide) offered in March 2013 and April 2015, as well as individual workshops at the school sites.