School Climate Surveys: Key concepts, approaches to measurement, and use

INTRODUCTION

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OSDFS School Climate Technical Assistance Symposium
New Orleans, LA  March 9-11, 2011
Presentation Overview

- Identify major concepts within the conditions for learning/school climate literature
- Identify how these concepts relate to student surveys and measures
- Discuss criteria for item selection
- Presentation on state surveys as sources of measures and items (Springer)
- Presentation on national surveys as sources of measures and items (DeVoe)
- Group discussion
Key Concepts

Significant progression in school safety thinking

• School as community
  o Students do not leave social-emotional issues at the door
  o Positive environment rather than point of access

• Expanded view of school safety

• Connection to academic success

• Whole school perspective

• Evidence-based
S³ Framework

Safe and Supportive Schools Model

- Engagement
  - Relationships
  - Respect for Diversity
  - School Participation

- Safety
  - Emotional Safety
  - Physical Safety
  - Substance Use

- Environment
  - Physical Environment
  - Academic Environment
  - Wellness
  - Disciplinary Environment
S3 Requirements

Safety Score must:
• Apply to individual schools
• Include
  o Student survey data
    • School safety data at minimum
    • Reliable and valid
  o Incident data
• Be based on formula to produce single score
• Be repeated
• Be published for public
S3 Options

Safety Score may:
• Include multiple school climate domains in addition to safety
  o Engagement and support
  o Environment
• Include definitions/ measures/ data to fit context
  o Expanded surveys (e.g., staff)
    • e.g., West Virginia
  o Incident data other than discipline
  o Student perceptions
    • E.g., Alaska, Chicago, Cleveland, New York City, California
• Be calculated in various ways
  • Weighting
  • Cut points
• Be presented to the public in various ways
Measurement: Multiple Perspectives

- Document change over time (surveillance)
- Inform continuous policy and program improvement
- Inform stakeholders (parents) and promote involvement
- Support accountability
- Evaluate effectiveness
- Support evidence-based practice
Multiple Frameworks
Example: Alliance for the Study of School Climate (ASSC)

Proven measure for helping schools improve their climate
1. Physical Appearance
2. Faculty Relations
3. Student Interactions
4. Leadership and Decision-Making
5. Discipline Environment
6. Learning and Assessment
7. Attitude and Culture
8. Community Relations
S³ / ASSC Crosswalk

Safe and Supportive Schools Framework

Engagement
- Relationships (2,3)
- Respect for Diversity (7)
- School Participation (8)

Safety
- Emotional Safety
- Physical Safety
- Substance Use

Environment
- Physical Environment (1)
- Academic Environment (6)
- Wellness
- Disciplinary Environment (5)
Operational Variation

In this example:
- Safety domain not as explicitly measured
- All areas in the engagement domain are measured, some are more explicitly
- All areas in the environment domain except wellness are explicitly measured

• Variance in domain coverage reflects
  - Development status of the school climate concept
  - Differences in purpose
    • ASSC instrument has proven effectiveness for providing actionable information of use to schools
Take Home Point

• Good, useful measures may have different emphases depending on purpose
## More Detailed Framework For School Climate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Safety</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Engagement</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional safety</td>
<td>Quality of Relationships</td>
<td>School connectedness</td>
<td>Class disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical safety</td>
<td>Respect for diversity</td>
<td>School Avoidance Behaviors</td>
<td>Physical plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncivil behavior</td>
<td>Teacher / adult support</td>
<td>School Participation</td>
<td>Access to necessary materials</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Peer support</td>
<td>Family / parent involvement</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons</td>
<td>Performance expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair / equitable disciplinary environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simple Flow of Instrument Development

- What do you need to measure? (school climate model / policy and program)
- What do you have / what can you get? (existing or available measures)
- Instrument Development (selection and refinement of domains, scales and items)
Options and Challenges

**OPTIONS**
- Selecting whole surveys
- Selecting components of surveys (domains)
- Selecting scales from surveys
- Selecting items from scales

**CHALLENGES**
- Clear articulation of policy and program
- Capture by what you have
- Flexibility or consistency?
- Psychometrics, burden and use