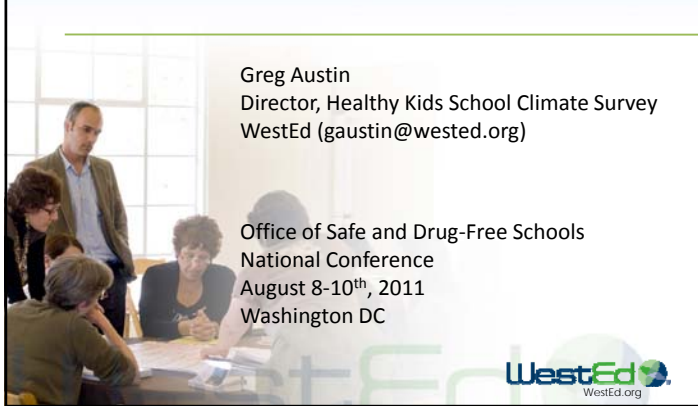


## Using a Parent Survey to Improve Parent Involvement and School Climate



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## Presentation

- Importance of assessing parents on school climate and experiences with school
- The Healthy Kids School Climate Survey (HKSCS)
- Assessment challenges
- Strategies for improving survey participation



## What Promotes Parent Involvement

- Communicating and demonstrating that parents are valued by and welcomed at school.
- Three “developmental” factors
  - Positive staff-parent relationships — caring, trust, support
  - Opportunities for meaningful participation — decisions making, contributory activities
  - High expectations



## Value of Parent School Climate Surveys

- Data to guide school improvement and parent involvement efforts
  - Need views of whole school community
  - Compare student, staff, parent results to identify commonalities and disconnections to address



### Value of Parent School Climate Surveys (2)

- Can and should enhance parent involvement
  - Asking for information conveys interest — that you value their input; you care.
  - Sharing results keeps parents informed about their children and school — a key involvement strategy.
  - Even more important: involving parents in addressing identified needs (decision-making)
    - An exercise in meaningful participation



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### Healthy Kids School Climate SURVEYS



### Healthy Kids School Climate Surveys

- Three comparable instruments:
  - Student, elementary (grade 5), middle, high school (since 1999)
  - Staff, K-12 (since 2004)
  - Parent, K-12 (since 2010)
- Customize with added questions
  - Not just surveys but a data collection system
- Online and paper versions
  - Students/staff separate scannable answer sheets
  - Parent scannable (OMR) booklet
- Developed under funding from the California Dept of Ed, 1997-present



### The HKSCS In California

- Comprises the California School Climate Health and Learning Survey System (Cal-SCHLS).
  - AKA California Healthy Kids Survey for students
- The largest effort in the nation to provide schools/communities statewide with local data from students, staff, and parents to:
  - Identify and meet the needs of students and promote academic achievement, positive development, and well-being.
  - Improve school climates, teacher satisfaction and retention, and parent involvement
- Identified as a model by ED (*Successful, Safe, & Healthy Students*)
- For further information: [www.cal-schls.wested.org](http://www.cal-schls.wested.org)



### Survey Supports and Resources

- Detailed administration guidebooks, webinars, and instructions
- Phone consultation
- Data processing and reporting
  - School, district, county, and state
- Survey Content Guidebooks
- *Data Use Guidebook*
- *Data Workbook to Improve School Climate and Close the Achievement Gap*



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### Other Major HKSCS Users

- Building Capacity in Military-Connected Schools Consortium (student, staff, parent)
  - 148 schools (K-12) in southern California annually, 2011-2015
  - Developed special modules to better assess needs of schools serving students in families in the military.
- Safe and Supportive Schools grants (student, staff, parent)
  - California, 300 schools in 60 districts
  - Louisiana, 86 schools in 8 districts
  - West Virginia, 48 schools
- National Evaluation of Safe Schools/Healthy Students grantees (staff only)
- School Turn-around Center, WestEd (staff, parent)



### HKSCS Parent Survey

- Newest survey, just beginning
- Shortest (34 questions)
- Voluntary and anonymous
- Online and/or paper
  - Same online instructions as with staff survey
  - Paper Optical Mark Recognition booklet
  - Survey staff combine data into one file if both used
- Translated into 26 languages
  - Reach 99% of parents and caregivers in California
  - Online and OMR instruments now only English and Spanish
- California School Parent Survey information:  
[www.cscs.wested.org](http://www.cscs.wested.org)



### Development Goals

- Keep it simple — low burden on schools
- Keep it short — not time consuming for parents
- Make it meaningful
  - School outreach to and involvement of parents
  - School environment and student/parent supports
- Comparability with student and staff survey data
- Information parents would want to give and likely to know



### Content

- School welcoming/informative to parents
- Parental involvement in education of children
- Students cared for and treated fairly, respectfully
- Equity of opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity
- Students held in high expectations
- Problems at school from student behavior (AOD use, violence, bullying, truancy, etc.)
- Clarity and equity of discipline
- Perceived school safety



### Parent Survey Reliability

	# of Items	$\alpha$
<b>Parent Support</b>		
Facilitation of parental involvement	5	0.78
<b>Student Supports</b>		
Positive student learning environment	4	0.81
Opportunities for meaningful participation	4	0.82
Cultural sensitivity	2	0.75
<b>Discipline and Safety</b>		
Clarity and equity of discipline policies	2	0.76
Perceived school safety	2	0.92
<b>Perceptions of Learning-Related Student Behaviors</b>		
Learning barriers	8	0.93

*Notes:*  
<sup>a</sup> Information from single-item measures not shown.  
 Source: Data from 102 parents who completed the parent school climate survey during the 2010/11 school year.



### 2010-11 Administration

- Parent respondents
  - 2,000 in elementary schools
  - 1,300 in middle schools
  - 12,000 in high school schools (largely S3)
- Online vs. paper
  - Military-connected schools, split evenly
  - S3 in California 73% paper, 27% online
  - West Virginia and Louisiana S3 option only online



### Some California Results

- Parent involvement and almost all indicators of a positive school climate decline after elementary school
  - Especially perceptions promotes academic success, inviting place to learn, safe place, treat students with respect, enforce rules equitably, encourage classroom and meaningful participation.
- In high school:
  - Only about 20% strongly agree school welcomes parent involvement, promptly responds to parent calls, encourages involvement
  - Only about 30% well-informed of school activities and child’s progress
- Concerns over student behaviors posing a problem at school dramatically increase after ES, with exception of physical fighting
  - Biggest change for AOD use (highest in HS, among lowest in ES)





### Strategies for Improving Parent Participation



### Encouraging Participation Essential

- High participation is needed to ensure data is representative and of value for program decision making.
  - Higher the better to have confidence in data value
  - Minimum 60% response rate
- Lower response rate doesn't mean the data not valuable — but representativeness uncertain



### Typical Parent Response (Participation) Rates

- Paper: Average district-sponsored surveys 30%
  - New York City: 45% — with heavy PR investment
  - Wide variation across districts and schools
- Online: Negligible
  - LAUSD, when given option <1%
- High school rates lower
  - California S3 (mixed paper/online): Only 6 out of 46 districts over 30%; majority under 10%
- Needier schools lower
  - 25% of parents in LAUSD inner-city high school reported no Internet access or working computer.



### Los Angeles Parent Survey

- Mail-out paper survey with return mail envelop, with high public relations effort.
  - 28% RR overall; 16% high school.
- Now having schools send out themselves via students
  - School monitoring
  - Some giving incentives (e.g., raffle ticket for returning)
    - Same technique effective for parental consent return



## Planning and Development

- Start early to obtain support and raise awareness
- Develop/select survey that is simple, brief, with patently relevant content to parents
- Promote sense of ownership among parents and staff from beginning
  - Get wide input into content/selection and administration process
- Plan along with student and staff surveys
  - Coordinate content to reflect whole school community
  - generate enthusiasm throughout school community
- Develop both online and paper versions
  - Assume most paper but some will like online convenience



## Obtain Administration Support

- First step: Obtain superintendent and principal(s) support
  - Wide variation in response rates occur across and within districts
- Meet early and get input
- Review survey content, purpose, value
- Review plans for raising staff/parent awareness and ensuring high participation rates
  - Emphasize importance that they communicate participation expectations to staff and parents
- Establish protocol and timeline for updating



## Raise Parent Awareness

- Advance notification
- Send informational packets to teachers and parents
- Publicize using many venues
  - Newsletters sent home
  - Staff meetings
  - Parent meetings (PTA)
  - Signs at school
  - School events
- Have ALL staff support and encourage participation



## Encourage Participation: What to Stress

- Survey convenience, simplicity, and brevity
- Value and need of data for school community
  - Identifying and addressing the needs of students and school conditions that are barriers to learning and overall well-being
  - Improving:
    - Parent involvement and supports
    - Student attendance, academic performance, and graduation.
    - Student services and supports
    - Teaching conditions
- The opportunity for parents to communicate confidentially and anonymously their perceptions of school
  - Allay concerns



### What to Stress

- Positive goals
  - Surveying not to point blame but help; to identify problems to address, supports that are needed, and strengths on which to build.
- Desire to hear parent voice and intent to act on it.
  - Convey confidence that you will be using their input — It's worth their while to do the surveys.
  - Describe plans for using data.



### Dissemination and Return

- Make convenient to fill out and return
- Mailing surveys with return envelopes doesn't necessarily improve participation
  - LAUSD 28% RR (16% high school).
- Send home with students
  - Send with student survey parental consent forms so they can see connections.
- Hand out when parents register students
- Provide time to take during parent meetings (Back-to-School, PTA)
- Have copies and drop-off return box in school office
- Provide incentive for return (e.g., each student gets a raffle ticket for school supplies)



### Monitoring

- Follow-up to encourage completion: mail, newsletters, notes home, signs at school.
- Online: Monitor real-time response rates and increase outreach if needed.



### Data Use

- Involve parents in reviewing results and action planning.
  - Not just parent but student and staff results
  - Decision making on what to do to address needs
  - Inform of actions taken to meet identified needs and program outcomes
  - Demonstrate their input has made a difference
- Outcomes:
  - Improved parent involvement and survey participation
  - Improved school climate, student performance and well-being

