

HSA School Climate Presentation

Presented by School Counselors
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January 8, 2019

What is School Climate?

- ▶ *School climate* refers to the current quality of school life. It is based on people's experiences of school and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices and organizational structure. *School climate* is often linked with the term "*school culture*," which describes the way schools "do things," informed by shared history, customary practices, formal and informal traditions, celebrations, teamwork and a psychological sense of community (The School Climate Challenge, 2008).
- ▶ The terms *school culture* and *school climate* describe the environments that affect the behavior of staff, students and parents. *School culture* is the shared beliefs and attitudes that characterize the district-wide organization and establish boundaries for its constituent units. *School climate* characterizes the organization at the school building and classroom levels (NJDOE, 2010).
- ▶ Ultimately, School Climate refers to the "feel" of the school.

Why is School Climate Important?

- ▶ There is a substantial connection between school climate and student achievement (NJDOE, 2010).
 - ▶ Research reports on school climate suggest that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behavior (Marshall, 2004).
- ▶ There is also a strong connection among school climate and staff member satisfaction, parent engagement and community support (NJDOE, 2010).
- ▶ School climate also relates to Harassment, Intimidation, and Bullying (HIB).

How Does School Climate Relate to Harrassment, Inimidation & Bullying (HIB) ?

- ▶ School climate can positively or negatively effect bullying behavior in schools (NJDOE, 2010).
- ▶ School climate is a key factor in whether students or adults will bully one another (DuPage County Schools, 2011).
- ▶ To reduce HIB, it is important to assess and improve, as appropriate, the climate or “feel” of the school and the social norms with regard to HIB (NJDOE, 2010).
 - ▶ Each school has a School Safety/School Climate Team which consists of differentiated staff members and a parent. The team reviews bullying behavior trends in the school and come up with ideas to improve the school climate as appropriate.

What is HIB?

- ▶ Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any gesture, any written, verbal or physical act, or any electronic communication, whether it be a single incident or a series of incidents, that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any actual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or a mental, physical or sensory disability, or by any other distinguishing characteristic, that takes place on school property, at any school sponsored function, on a school bus, or off school grounds as provided for in section 16 of P.L.2010, c.122 (C.18A:37-15.3), that substantially disrupts or interferes with the orderly operation of the school or the rights of other students and that:
 - ▶ a reasonable person should know, under the circumstances, will have the effect of physically or emotionally harming a student or damaging the student's property, or placing a student in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm to his person or damage to his property;
 - ▶ has the effect of insulting or demeaning any student or group of students; or
 - ▶ creates a hostile educational environment for the student by interfering with a student's education or by severely or pervasively causing physical or emotional harm to the student.

What is the Difference Between Conflict and Bullying?

Conflict

- ▶ Conflict is a disagreement or argument in which both sides exchange words and/or actions
- ▶ The motive is resolution of a problem

Bullying

- ▶ Bullying is a targeted act
- ▶ There is an imbalance of power (this can be size, strength, age, social status, etc.)

** The schools address both conflicts and acts of bullying **

What do the Elementary Schools do to Promote a Positive School Climate and Combat Bullying?

Some Examples:

- ▶ Beatrice Gilmore
 - ▶ Mix It Up Lunch
 - ▶ Indoor Recess Lessons
 - ▶ Classroom Lessons(Jargon)
- ▶ Charles Olbon
 - ▶ Footprints for Life Program (2nd Grade)
 - ▶ No Name Calling Week
- ▶ District-Wide
 - ▶ Week of Respect
 - ▶ School Violence Awareness Week
 - ▶ Red Ribbon Week
 - ▶ Random Acts of Kindness Week

What Can Parents do to Help Promote a Positive School Climate and Combat Bullying?

Keep doing what you are doing right now! Parental involvement is very important.

Report any concerns with your child's teacher, principal and/or counselor. Communication is very helpful as we cannot address issues that we are unaware of.

Continue the conversation and follow-up at home. Children learn a lot from modeling. The more they hear positive words and see positive actions, the more they are likely to say and do them as well.

** To help facilitate these conversations, please take home a SMART decisions + Feelings card (as counselors we use them daily to help students identify how they are feeling and how to solve problems).

Thank You!

Please contact us with any questions.

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