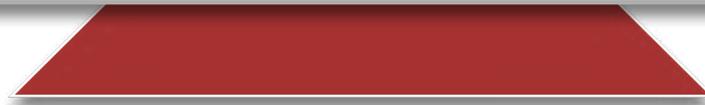
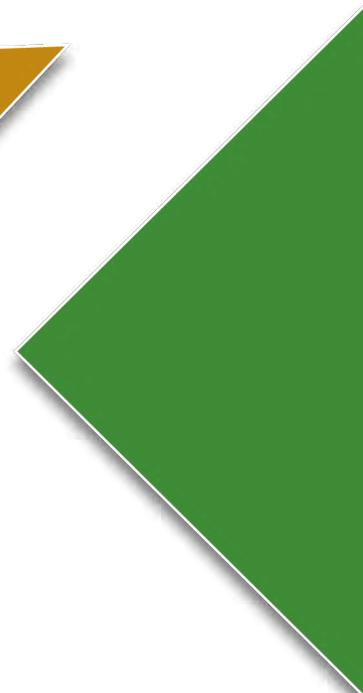
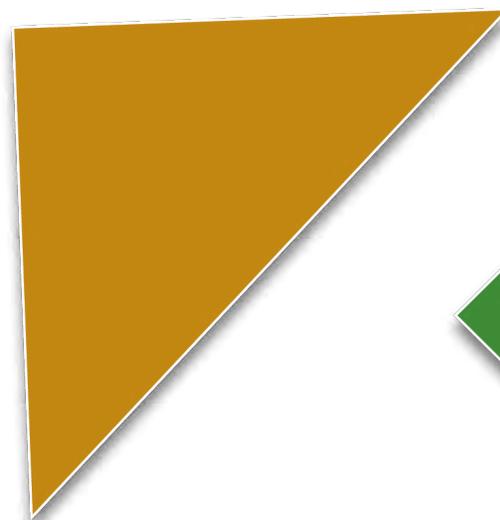


Reference Manual

on Making School Climate Improvements



JANUARY 2017



Disclaimer

This *Reference Manual* was designed and written under the U.S. Department of Education (Department) Contract Number EDESE12O0035 by American Institutes for Research, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). Rita Foy Moss served as the contracting officer's representative (COR) for the NCSSLE technical assistance center.

This *Reference Manual* contains materials that are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect its importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Department. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

January 2017

This document is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. Although permission to reprint this product is not necessary, the following is the preferred citation:

Yoder, N., Darling-Churchill, K., Colombi, G. D., Ruddy, S., Neiman, S., Chagnon, E., & Mayo, R. (2017). *School climate improvement reference manual*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students.

This document is available free of charge at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/reference-manual>

Availability of Alternate Formats

Requests for documents in alternate formats, such as Braille or large print, should be submitted to the Alternate Format Center by calling 202.260.0852 or by contacting the 504 coordinator via e-mail at om_eeos@ed.gov.

Notice to Limited-English-Proficient Persons

If you have difficulty understanding English, you may request language assistance services for Department information that is available to the public. These language assistance services are available free of charge. If you need more information about interpretation or translation services, please call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1.800.872.5327) (TTY: 1.800.877.8339) or e-mail us at ED.Language.Assistance@ed.gov. You also can write to U.S. Department of Education, Information Resource Center, LBJ Education Building, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20202.

Contents

Introduction	1
Can You Make School Climate Improvements?	2
Who Can Use This <i>Reference Manual</i> ?	3
The School Climate Improvement Resource Package	3
<i>Reference Manual</i> Organization	4
How to Use This <i>Reference Manual</i>	7
Activity Sets	7
Action Steps	7
Objectives	7
Important Note Before You Begin	9
Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)	10
Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 1 [1.1])	12
OBJECTIVE 1.1.1: Engage key leaders in making school climate improvements	12
OBJECTIVE 1.1.2: Form a core planning team using a multi-tiered framework	14
OBJECTIVE 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate”	16
OBJECTIVE 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative	19
OBJECTIVE 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers	22
OBJECTIVE 1.1.6: Identify already administered school-based surveys, including and beyond school climate	24
OBJECTIVE 1.1.7: Articulate vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and guidelines for the proposed effort at multiple tiers	26
Plan for School Climate Improvement Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 2 [1.2])	28
OBJECTIVE 1.2.1: Plan to put clear school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies in place within the school improvement plan	28
OBJECTIVE 1.2.2: Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices with other important initiatives	30
OBJECTIVE 1.2.3: Include questions about knowledge and experience with school climate and student support in job descriptions, interview protocols, and evaluations	32
OBJECTIVE 1.2.4: Include relevant school climate and student support materials in orientation packets	33
Develop Infrastructure and Plan for Collecting Data (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 3 [1.3])	34
OBJECTIVE 1.3.1: Define which department in the state, district, or school administrative structure will oversee the initiative	34
OBJECTIVE 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators (or “theory of action”)	35
OBJECTIVE 1.3.3: Identify, adapt, or develop school climate surveys	37
OBJECTIVE 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data	40
OBJECTIVE 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data	41
OBJECTIVE 1.3.6: Develop a school climate index (optional)	43
OBJECTIVE 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data	45

OBJECTIVE 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure (e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems)	46
OBJECTIVE 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners (e.g., local universities)	47
Assess Schools' Readiness, Needs, and Capacities (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 4 [1.4])	49
OBJECTIVE 1.4.1: Develop selection criteria and select participating schools (If the initiative will not be universal)	49
OBJECTIVE 1.4.2: Conduct a needs and resources assessment	50
OBJECTIVE 1.4.3: Develop multi-tiered support approaches for students, staff, and families.	52
Evaluate and Refine the Planning Process and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 5 [1.5]).	54
OBJECTIVE 1.5.1: Review planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability	54
District or State Example of Planning Phase Activity Set	55
 Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2).	57
Engage Staff, Families, Students, and the Community to Roll Out Initiative (ACTIVITY SET 2, ACTION STEP 1 [2.1])	58
OBJECTIVE 2.1.1: Develop messaging to stakeholders on school climate improvement efforts	59
OBJECTIVE 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input	61
OBJECTIVE 2.1.3: Develop school-level climate team(s)	62
OBJECTIVE 2.1.4: Conduct orientation activities for all school personnel	64
OBJECTIVE 2.1.5: Conduct orientation activities for students	65
OBJECTIVE 2.1.6: Conduct orientation activities for family and community stakeholders.	67
OBJECTIVE 2.1.7: Develop guidance for stakeholders on the role of data in selecting intervention(s).	69
OBJECTIVE 2.1.8: Effectively form family-school partnerships	71
Evaluate and Refine Engagement Efforts With Stakeholders and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (Activity Set 2, Action Step 2 [2.2])	73
OBJECTIVE 2.2.1: Review stakeholder engagement and the established communication infrastructure for sustainability	74
District or State Example of Engaging Stakeholders Activity Set	75
 Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A).	77
Collect Data (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 1 [3.1A]).	78
OBJECTIVE 3.1.1A: Develop an administration protocol for data collection	79
OBJECTIVE 3.1.2A: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders	82
OBJECTIVE 3.1.3A: Administer surveys to target population(s) each school year.	83
OBJECTIVE 3.1.4A: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument(s) as necessary	85
OBJECTIVE 3.1.5A: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate.	85
OBJECTIVE 3.1.6A: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families	88
Analyze Data (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 2 [3.2A])	90
OBJECTIVE 3.2.1A: Ensure high-quality survey data	90



OBJECTIVE 3.2.2A: Analyze scales (topic areas) available in your survey data.	91
OBJECTIVE 3.2.3A: Analyze data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families) . .	93
OBJECTIVE 3.2.4A: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest	94
OBJECTIVE 3.2.5A: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available	96
Disseminate Findings (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 3 [3.3A]).	97
OBJECTIVE 3.3.1A: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings	97
OBJECTIVE 3.3.2A: Generate an index score for each school (optional)	99
OBJECTIVE 3.3.3A: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format	101
Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 4 [3.4A])	102
OBJECTIVE 3.4.1A: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability . .	103
District Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set.	104
 Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)	105
Collect Data (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 1 [3.1B]).	106
OBJECTIVE 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection	107
OBJECTIVE 3.1.2B: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders	110
OBJECTIVE 3.1.3B: Administer surveys to target population(s) each school year.	112
OBJECTIVE 3.1.4B: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument(s) as necessary . .	113
OBJECTIVE 3.1.5B: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate. . .	115
OBJECTIVE 3.1.6B: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families . .	117
Analyze Data (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 2 [3.2B])	119
OBJECTIVE 3.2.1B: Ensure high-quality survey data	119
OBJECTIVE 3.2.2B: Analyze scales (topic areas) available in your survey data.	120
OBJECTIVE 3.2.3B: Analyze data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families) . .	122
OBJECTIVE 3.2.4B: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest	123
OBJECTIVE 3.2.5B: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available	124
Disseminate Findings (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 3 [3.3B]).	126
OBJECTIVE 3.3.1B: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings	126
OBJECTIVE 3.3.2B: Generate an index score for each school (optional)	128
OBJECTIVE 3.3.3B: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format	129
Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 4 [3.4B])	131
OBJECTIVE 3.4.1B: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability . .	131
District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set	132



	Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)	134
	Choose, Plan for, and Implement Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4, ACTION STEP 1 [4.1])	135
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.1: Review current interventions that address school climate at multiple tiers	135
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.2: Review summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective	138
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.3: Assess whether current interventions are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers	140
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.4: Assess readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach	142
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data	145
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.6: Participate in a thoughtful planning process for implementing the selected interventions	149
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.7: Implement interventions, ensuring fidelity of implementation or appropriate adaptation	153
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.8: Use data to monitor the fidelity of interventions	156
	OBJECTIVE 4.1.9: Continue school climate messaging to districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools at different levels of implementation	157
	Evaluate and Refine the Choice of Interventions and Implementation Strategies and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 4, ACTION STEP 2 [4.2])	158
	OBJECTIVE 4.2.1: Plan how to assess implementation with fidelity across time (e.g., during a five-year period)	159
	District or State Example of Implementing Programmatic Interventions Activity Set	161
	Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)	162
	Evaluate the School Climate Improvement Process (ACTIVITY SET 5, ACTION STEP 1 [5.1])	163
	OBJECTIVE 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate effort	163
	OBJECTIVE 5.1.2: Conduct a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate process	165
	OBJECTIVE 5.1.3: Conduct an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations	167
	OBJECTIVE 5.1.4: Prepare an annual end-of-year process and outcome report	169
	Evaluate and Refine the Overall Effort and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability From a Multi-Tiered Perspective (ACTIVITY SET 5, ACTION STEP 2 [5.2])	170
	OBJECTIVE 5.2.1: Strengthen school climate effort characteristics and sustain infrastructure	171
	District or State Example of Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements Activity Set	172

Introduction

Students learn best when they are in environments in which they feel safe, supported, challenged, and accepted. Such environments have positive school climates that foster the social, emotional, and academic well-being of all students. Research shows that a positive school climate is linked with student academic success, prosocial behaviors, increased graduation and attendance rates, reduced dropout rates, and higher rates of teacher satisfaction.¹ Students who learn in positive learning environments that are safe, supportive, and engaging are more likely to improve academically, participate more fully in the classroom, and develop skills that will help them be successful in school and in life.^{2,3} Its relationship to student achievement extends across elementary and secondary education,⁴ as well as across school types (e.g., size, location, and levels of income/socioeconomic status).⁵ In addition, students who experience positive school climates are less likely to participate in disruptive behavior.⁶ Similarly, the ways in which teachers experience the climate of the school impact their levels of stress and burnout.⁷

School climate reflects how members of the school community experience the school, including interpersonal relationships, teacher and other staff practices, and organizational arrangements. School climate includes factors that serve as conditions for learning and that support physical and emotional safety, connection and support, and engagement. A positive school climate reflects attention to fostering social and physical safety, providing support that enables students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards, as well as encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.

School climate improvement produces benefits for all students. Students are more likely to engage in school and develop positive relationships when schools participate in an intentional effort to improve and sustain school climate. Similarly, students are more likely to feel safe, nurtured, and welcome and are less likely to exhibit problem behavior, in and out of school. In addition, a positive

- ¹ National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (2011). *Making the case for the importance of school climate and its measurement* [Webinar]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from <http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/making-case-importance-school-climate-and-its-measurement>
- ² MacNeil, A. J., Prater, D. L., & Busch, S. (2009). The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 12(1), 73–84.
- ³ Ripski, M. B., & Gregory, A. (2009). Unfair, unsafe, and unwelcome: Do high school students' perceptions of unfairness, hostility, and victimization in school predict engagement and achievement? *Journal of School Violence*, 8(4), 355–375.
- ⁴ Osher, D., Kendziora, K., & Chinen, M. (2008). *Student connection research: Final narrative report to the Spencer Foundation*. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from http://www.air.org/sites/default/files/downloads/report/Spencer_final_report_3_31_08_0.pdf
- ⁵ Stewart, E. (2008). School structural characteristics, student effort, peer associations, and parental involvement: The influence of school- and individual-level factors on academic achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(2), 179–204.
- ⁶ Osher, D., Dwyer, K., & Jimerson, S. R. (2006). Safe, supportive, and effective schools: Promoting school success to reduce school violence. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 51–72). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- ⁷ Grayson, J. L., & Alvarez, H. K. (2008). School climate factors relating to teacher burnout: A mediator model. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(5), 1349–1363.

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)

school climate buttresses other academic and student support interventions, including those that address the needs of struggling students and students who are vulnerable or at risk.⁸

Can You Make School Climate Improvements?

Whether you work in a state educational agency (SEA), district, charter authorizer,⁹ charter management organization (CMO)/education management organization (EMO),¹⁰ or school, there may be efforts already underway to improve the school climate for your students and staff. In fact, you may already be conducting activities aimed at improving your school climate! For example, many schools are implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to improve school climate and reduce suspensions. However, you may need more support to initiate systematic school climate improvements, coordinate efforts, or implement additional school climate improvement strategies. This *Reference Manual* is designed as a resource for states, districts, charter authorizers, CMOs/EMOs, and schools interested in initiating or enhancing school climate efforts and improvements. It is based on the latest research and lessons learned from states, districts, and schools that improved school climate and is organized into the following sets of activities:

1. Planning school climate improvements;
2. Engaging stakeholders in school climate improvements;
3. Collecting and reporting school climate data;
4. Choosing and implementing school climate interventions; and
5. Monitoring and evaluating school climate improvements.

We provide guidance for each set of activities (described in more detail later), as well as concrete strategies, anticipated outputs and outcomes, and resources that you can use to improve school climate. Resources include self-assessment tools, self-paced online modules that include practicing key skills, research, and other products (e.g., webinars, planning tools, and interpretation guides).

School climate improvements are not about getting it “done” in the short term but about improving school climate and conditions for learning to improve student outcomes in the long term.

⁸ U.S. Department of Education. (2014). *Guiding principles: A resource guide for improving school climate and discipline*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf>

⁹ A charter authorizer is the legal entity that decides who can start a new charter school, set expectations and oversee school performance, and decide which schools should continue to serve students or not. Depending on state law, authorizers can be districts, education agencies, independent boards, universities, mayors and municipalities, and nonprofit organizations. See <http://www.qualitycharters.org/about/>.

¹⁰ Charter foundations or boards can contract with an education service provider (ESP) to manage the day-to-day operations and other responsibilities of charter schools, including curriculum and school climate. The most common types of ESPs are CMOs and EMOs. CMOs are usually nonprofit entities that manage some aspects of a charter school or an entire network of schools. EMOs are typically for-profit companies that manage all aspects of the educational experience of a network of schools. See <http://americanschoolchoice.com/what-is-school-choice/what-purpose-do-network-charter-operators-serve/>.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



Who Can Use This Reference Manual?

The *Reference Manual* is designed for individuals or teams who want to make school climate improvements. The manual can be referenced by state leaders supporting districts, charter authorizers supporting CMOs/EMOs, CMO/EMO leaders supporting schools, traditional and public charter school leaders who want to improve the climate of their school(s), and school climate teams. It provides you with strategies and activities you can employ to improve the climate of your school(s).

This *Reference Manual* also is for those who want to learn more about the strategies and activities that schools and districts can use to improve school climate.

The School Climate Improvement Resource Package

This *Reference Manual* is part of a larger set of Web-based tools and resources called the School Climate Improvement Resource Package (Resource Package), developed by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) through the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE).¹¹ Whether you are new to school climate improvements or have been implementing the effort for years, the Resource Package allows you to take a step back to assess what you are doing, how you are doing it, and what you have left to do, in a comprehensive manner. To support these efforts, the Resource Package includes the following:

- The [Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements](#) provides you with a summary of the information found within the *Reference Manual*, including the key strategies for getting started on your school climate efforts, tips on what it looks like when the strategies are done well, and what to avoid;
- The [School Climate Improvement Reference Manual](#) (this guide) provides a comprehensive list of goals, strategies, outputs, and resources that correspond to the five activity sets for improving school climate;
- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides](#) are customized for each stakeholder group—district leaders, school leaders, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, families, students, and community partners—and provide action steps on how each stakeholder group can support school climate improvements, tips on what it looks like when the action steps are implemented effectively, and what to avoid;
- The [Data Interpretation Guide](#) provides descriptions of and approaches for using and interpreting school climate survey data;
- [Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides](#) assist in using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas overall and on how to use these data to target interventions in a multi-tiered system of supports;
- A [Data Analysis Worksheet](#) provides key questions the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) users can use to guide analysis of their data;

¹¹ This manual does not impose any new legal requirements or change any existing legal requirements, and the strategies and activities it suggests are not mandatory.

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)

- [Online Modules](#) provide users with an opportunity to learn and practice skills; and
- [Self-Assessment Tools](#) help you identify which resources would be helpful to your district or school and some pointers on what you should keep in mind as you work on school climate improvements.

The Resource Package accompanies the release of the [EDSCLS](#), which is a suite of four surveys in a Web-based administration and reporting platform. Developed by ED's National Center for Education Statistics, EDSCLS provides states, districts, charter authorizers, CMOs/EMOs, and schools nationwide with student, instructional and noninstructional staff, and parent/guardian surveys on a Web-based platform that allows for the collection and reporting of school climate data. However, all parts of the Resource Package *are designed to support users of any valid and reliable school climate survey(s), not just those using EDSCLS.*

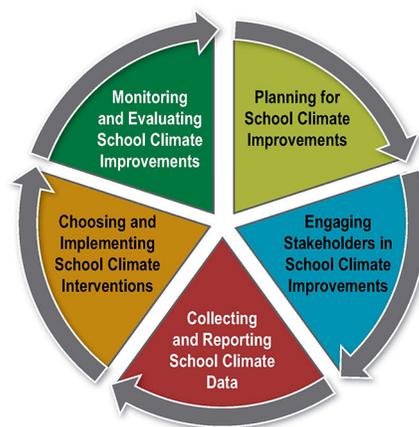
The Web-based Resource Package presents manageable, action-oriented, and evidence-based resources to help you and your colleagues with your efforts to create a positive school climate. While progressing through the current *Reference Manual*, you can track your progress along the school climate improvement process by using the Self-Assessment Tools (described earlier). These Self-Assessment Tools provide you with customized feedback guiding you to resources you can immediately implement. You can maneuver through the Resource Package by using the hyperlinks throughout. For more information on the entire Resource package, visit <https://safe.supportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about>.

Reference Manual Organization

The *Reference Manual* identifies five overarching sets of activities for improving school climate, with the goal of improving student outcomes (e.g., achievement, attendance, behaviors, and skills). These sets of activities help you initiate, implement, and sustain your school climate improvements. For each activity set, the *Reference Manual* presents a clear purpose and set of activities that can help schools and districts develop an infrastructure to promote and sustain their efforts. The sets of activities are illustrated in Figure 1.

1. *Planning for School Climate Improvements:* Planning is important because you need to develop an infrastructure to implement and sustain school climate improvements, as well as obtain and maintain buy-in and engagement of key leaders and members of the school community. Effective planning of your school climate efforts is essential

Figure 1. Five Activity Sets for Improving School Climate



to maximize the impact of your efforts, ensure that resources are used efficiently, and enhance the likelihood that your efforts will realize intended impacts and have lasting effects.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

Planning your school climate improvement can provide the foundation for the remainder of your efforts. Planning allows you to be purposeful in how you engage members of your school community (Activity Set 2); collect, analyze, report, and use data (Activity Set 3); identify and implement interventions that fit your setting and best meet your needs (Activity Set 4); and monitor and evaluate your climate-related activities (Activity Set 5).

2. *Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements*: The second activity set—engaging stakeholders—includes informing all members of your school community about the efforts to improve school climate, as well as obtaining their input on your plans for collecting data and improving school climate. Stakeholders include administrators, teachers, students, district/CMO/EMO and school staff and volunteers, parents/guardians, governing board members, and community members. Engagement can contribute to improved data quality as well as the effective use of school climate data. Engagement goes beyond buy-in and involves actively working with stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns and incorporating those concerns into your plans. Stakeholder engagement strategies also may include professional development and support to maximize the effective use of data, strategic communications and dissemination activities to maximize participation and data use, and stakeholder engagement in developing plans to improve data collection.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

To engage your stakeholders, involve them in your planning (Activity Set 1). In addition, engaging stakeholders up front is critical to other sets of activities, such as collecting data, because stakeholders who are engaged are more likely to respond to surveys and are more likely to take the surveys seriously (Activity Set 3). Finally, engaged stakeholders are more likely to implement, or support the implementation of, the chosen school climate interventions the way they are intended (Activity Set 4) and can help you use monitoring and evaluation data for improving overall efforts (Activity Set 5).

3. *Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data*: The third set of activities provides strategies for collecting, analyzing, and reporting your school climate data. Effective data collection is important because you want to collect data that are valid and reliable. Completing this task successfully depends on using valid and reliable surveys and implementing them in a manner that maximizes high response rates and reliable answers. It also is important to analyze and report the data in ways that maximize the ability of all members of the school community to understand and be guided by the data collected. Furthermore, effective reporting of your data further promotes school community member buy-in and engagement, as seeing their own results helps them understand how others perceive the climate in the building.

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)



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

You can begin collecting data during planning activities (Activity Set 1) when you conduct your initial readiness assessment. In addition, you can begin planning what data you would collect and how you would analyze and disseminate the data. Your engagement activities (Activity Set 2) can contribute to the quality of your data collection. After you collect your data, you will use your results to select your interventions (Activity Set 4) and will continue to collect data to monitor and evaluate your effort (Activity Set 5).

4. *Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions:* The fourth set of activities—choosing and implementing school climate interventions—is about incorporating interventions into your school or district that will help improve the climate of your school(s), particularly in areas where you have needs. Interventions encompass specific practices with defined activities, policies, and initiatives; broad strategies, approaches, and effective practices; as well as evidence-based programs (EBPs) and those with evidence of promise. This activity set references strategies to select evidence-based interventions that have been demonstrated to improve results in the areas you are concerned with in settings like yours. Activities also include ones aimed at supporting the effective implementation of the interventions that you selected.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

During the planning activities (Activity Set 1), you can review the interventions that you are currently implementing in your school(s). In the current set of activities, you can compare the interventions you currently have with the needs identified by your data in Activity Set 3. You can use this crosswalk to help determine which interventions to remove, modify, expand, or implement, as well as the types of resources and supports that educators need to implement those interventions.

5. *Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements:* The fifth set of activities—monitoring and evaluating the overall effort—provides information on how to assess your school climate improvements. This task includes monitoring how well you are implementing the effort (the processes), as well as assessing the impact your effort has on your school and your students (the outcomes). This set of activities helps you assess your engagement strategies, the selection and implementation of interventions, and the outcomes of those efforts. In addition, the results from this activity set will inform the planning activities (Activity Set 1) for your next cycle of school climate implementation efforts.



CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

Activity Set 5 helps you monitor and assess the work that you conducted across all the activity sets for your school climate improvements. The activities can help you improve your current efforts as well as refine your efforts in the next iteration of school climate activities.

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)

How to Use This Reference Manual

Improving school climate is an ongoing process that varies by state, district, charter authorizer, CMO/EMO, or school, and across time. The *Reference Manual* provides you with comprehensive strategies to implement school climate improvements. **Although you can read the manual from front to back, we suggest you use this manual for those activity sets, action steps, or objectives that you need the most help on or that are the “lowest hanging fruit.”** If you need something shorter and concise, use the [Quick Guide](#), as it provides the big picture of school climate improvements. Where possible, we employed similar language in the *Reference Manual* and the *Quick Guide* to prevent ambiguity.

To support your use of the manual, the Web-based manual includes hyperlinks to sections to facilitate the use of the guide. The manual is organized according to activity sets, action steps, and objectives, which provide varying levels of detail depending on the actions that you are engaging in to improve your school climate.

Activity Sets

As previously mentioned, the *Reference Manual* is organized according to the five activity sets. The activity sets provide the overarching sets of activities that help improve school climate. They help guide you to the more specific activities and strategies you may want to implement, depending on the part of the school climate efforts you want to work on.

Action Steps

Each of the five activity sets is composed of two or more action steps to take to accomplish the goals of the activity set. Action steps are the broad actions that you can take to effectively implement each respective action step. Each action step comprises multiple objectives.

Objectives

The objectives provide benchmarks for implementing effective, systematic, and sustainable efforts. Objectives are labeled based on the activity set and action step in which they reside (e.g., Objective 2.1.3 is the third objective in Action Step 1 of Activity Set 2: Engaging Stakeholders).

To realize each objective, we provide the objective’s **purpose**, **strategies** for realizing the objective, **examples of outputs or products** that will result from implementing the strategies, and **resources** to help you implement the strategies to realize the objectives. The objectives and the associated strategies, outputs, and resources are described in Figure 2.

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)

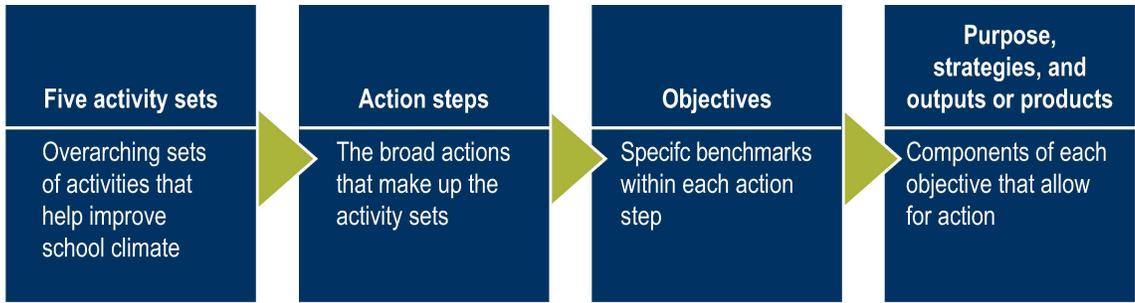
Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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

- 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)

Figure 2. Components of the Reference Manual



Purpose

We explain the purpose of each objective by providing an overview of it, why it is important, the overarching anticipated outcomes, and how it is relevant to school climate improvements. Many of the objectives build off one another and interconnect, so we provide information about how to make those connections. Lastly, we provide information you should consider when deciding which strategies to use to achieve an objective.

Strategies

We offer multiple strategies to help you achieve the objectives presented throughout this *Reference Manual*. Some strategies are more comprehensive and long-lasting; others are discrete activities that facilitate processes but are not always necessary. **You do not need to participate in all of the strategies provided to achieve the specific objectives, nor are the strategies presented as an exhaustive list.** The strategies referenced provide you with a starting place to begin working toward the objective.



This icon appears next to strategies that are specific to districts, charter authorizers, or CMOs/EMOs that are working on making school climate improvements.



This icon appears next to school climate improvement strategies that are specific to schools, both traditional and charter.

Example Outputs and Products

The Outputs and Products sections provide you with examples of products that may result from implementing the strategies.

Resources

We provide multiple resources that can help you implement the strategies and develop the anticipated outputs or products. Multiple types of resources are provided, some of which include the following:

- Case studies: Stories that are used as a teaching tool to show the application of a theory or concept to real situations; most commonly found in the form of a video or narrative
- Discussion guides for specific school climate topic areas
- News: News articles or reports in the media—may include videos

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)

- Policy/Guidance: Official federal policy briefs
- Products: Publications, issue or policy briefs, fact sheets, guides, training materials, archived webinars, podcasts, case law, or case studies
- Research: Research-focused resources, usually published in journals or by research organizations
- Self-paced online modules that engage learners in practicing key skills
- Tools: Toolkits, toolboxes, worksheets, checklists, and templates
- Training materials: “How-to’s” that provide information and tips on skills—may include videos
- Videos: Any resource that is presented as a video and does not fall under the categories of News, Case Study, or Training Materials; these may include promotional videos or informational videos about a particular intervention
- Websites: Links to websites but not to a specific page or section
- Other resources: Anything that falls outside the other categories; note that many district- and state-specific resources come from Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) grantees and are designated with an “(S3)”

Important Note Before You Begin

Although each activity set has a finite purpose and corresponding activities and resources, they are interconnected and build on one another to create a cohesive and systematic process. We note where those connections occur to help you connect your work. It is common for districts, CMOs/EMOs, and schools to implement strategies across and within activity sets at any given time. We now invite you to use the information about each of the five activity sets to initiate or enhance school climate improvements in your community.

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

This set of activities lays the groundwork for improving school climate and involves multiple action steps—especially when you are first starting out—because it involves obtaining crucial buy-in from key leaders and stakeholders. In addition, this set of activities provides guidance on how to prepare for the activities found within the other activity sets. Planning reduces your subsequent work when it is time to implement those activities. Even if you have already been implementing activities to improve school climate, the planning activities help you take a step back and consider what is working and what is not, and plan from there. In addition, this activity set includes strategies for developing an infrastructure that will help you sustain the work for the future. New charter schools have the unique opportunity and challenge of developing and implementing school climate initiatives from scratch or relatively early in the life of schools. This makes the early planning activities all the more important to achieving fidelity and long-term effectiveness.



For district or CMO/EMO staff, the Planning Activity Set can be particularly challenging because you will be planning to roll out these efforts to schools, whose readiness you will have to gauge to identify the amount and type of support and oversight they may need.

The Planning Activity Set consists of five action steps, which include the following: (1) develop a plan for making school climate improvements; (2) plan for school climate sustainably; (3) develop infrastructure and plan for collecting data; (4) assess school readiness, needs, and capacities; and (5) evaluate and refine the planning process and continue planning for improvements and sustainability. Each action step provides multiple school climate objectives you will likely need to successfully plan for your effort. Many of the objectives overlap with one another, so you may be completing objectives across action steps within activity sets concurrently.

The *Reference Manual* provides you with comprehensive strategies to implement school climate improvements. If you need something shorter and concise, use the [Quick Guide](#) because it provides the big picture of school climate improvements.

ACTION STEP 1. Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements

- [OBJECTIVE 1.1.1: Engage key leaders in making school climate improvements](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 1.1.2: Form a core planning team using a multi-tiered framework](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate”](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers](#)

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)

- OBJECTIVE 1.1.6: Identify already administered school-based surveys, including and beyond school climate
- OBJECTIVE 1.1.7: Articulate vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and guidelines for the proposed effort at multiple tiers

ACTION STEP 2. Plan for School Climate Improvement Sustainability

- OBJECTIVE 1.2.1: Plan to put clear school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies in place within the school improvement plan
- OBJECTIVE 1.2.2: Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices with other important initiatives
- OBJECTIVE 1.2.3: Include questions about knowledge and experience with school climate and student support in job descriptions, interview protocols, and evaluations
- OBJECTIVE 1.2.4: Include relevant school climate and student support materials in orientation packets

ACTION STEP 3. Develop Infrastructure and Plan for Collecting Data

- OBJECTIVE 1.3.1: Define which department in the state, district, or school administrative structure will oversee the initiative
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators (or “theory of action”)
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.3: Identify, adapt, or develop school climate surveys
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.6: Develop a school climate index (optional)
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure (e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems)
- OBJECTIVE 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners (e.g., local universities)

ACTION STEP 4. Assess Schools’ Readiness, Needs, and Capacities

- OBJECTIVE 1.4.1: Develop selection criteria for participating schools (if the initiative will not be universal)
- OBJECTIVE 1.4.2: Conduct a needs and resources assessment
- OBJECTIVE 1.4.3: Develop multi-tiered support approaches for students, staff, and families

ACTION STEP 5. Evaluate and Refine the Planning Process and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability

- OBJECTIVE 1.5.1: Review planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability

District or State Example of Planning Phase Activity Set

Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 1 [1.1])

The first planning action step—developing a plan for your school climate initiative—is composed of seven school climate objectives. Each objective helps prepare the launch of your school climate improvements.

School climate efforts are generally more successful when:

- Stakeholders are engaged and ready to participate in the process;
- The state, district, charter authorizer, CMO/EMO, or school has the capacity to support or engage in school climate activities; and
- Data are used to inform and guide the planning process.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.1: Engage key leaders in making school climate improvements

Purpose of engaging key leaders

Key leaders are important; they guide the direction of the district, CMO/EMO, or school; identify priorities; and direct resources to those priorities. It is important to engage these key leaders to identify their perceptions of needs; elicit and address their questions and concerns; gain authorization; and, when necessary, create a sense of importance or urgency. It also is important to clearly identify roles and responsibilities as you engage your key leaders in school climate efforts. The roles and responsibilities of leaders vary depending on whether the focus is at the district or school level. For example, if the focus is at the school level, district leaders should be engaged in the process in a supporting role, rather than a leadership role.

Strategies for engaging key leaders

- Understand leaders' priorities and needs.
- Identify the benefits of launching a school climate initiative for different members of your school community (e.g., school, students, families, staff, and communities).
- Initiate discussions with leaders and key staff that include schools' specific needs related to supporting school climate as it relates to district or school priorities. Connect to *Objective 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of "improving school climate"* and *Objective 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers.*

WHO ARE KEY LEADERS?



Key leaders may include the superintendent, the executive director, the chief academic officer, assistant superintendents, and teachers union leaders (if appropriate).



Key leaders may include the principal, the head of school, the assistant principal, the charter authorizer, a governing board member, and the school leadership team.

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)



- d. Consider who can champion the work at the leadership level.
- e. Consider what the anticipated barriers to obtaining buy-in may be, how barriers can be overcome, why the school climate work should be done, and who will be responsible for each piece of the work.
- f. Discuss how school climate can be improved in their district or school, including what will be expected of key leaders, district and school staff, students, families, and community members.



Districts and CMOs/EMOs should determine how they will differentiate campus-level supports depending on the unique needs of each school.

1.1.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Data that demonstrate schools' urgent needs and challenges
- A list of barriers and strategies to overcome them
- A list of opportunities and benefits of improving school climate for the school and the community
- Key components of school climate improvements, including expectations and roles of various stakeholders

Related resources for engaging key leaders

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 1: Understanding the Importance of School Climate and Engaging School Leadership in Its Improvement](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides activities to practice engaging leadership in school climate improvements.
- [Willing, Able → Ready: Basics and Policy Implications of Readiness as a Key Component for Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief defines organizational readiness and the three components readiness is composed of: motivation of people in the organization, organizational capacities (general functioning), and intervention-specific capacities (conditions that support a specific intervention).
- [“Chapter 2: Readiness: Assess Your School’s Potential for Change,” from Building Learning Communities With Character](#) (Novick, Kress, & Elias; 2002)
 - This guide includes research about school climate improvement and its benefits, as well as “temperature check tools” to determine how ready a school or district is to invest in school climate improvement. The evaluation tools measure multiple levels of readiness and can help start initial discussions with key leaders and staff to connect school or district priorities with school climate needs.
- [Readiness Assessment Self-Study Assessment Tool](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This readiness assessment tool is a short survey that is designed to help school leaders and leadership teams identify strengths and needs to guide school climate improvement efforts.

- 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)

- [School Climate Process of “End-of-Stage” Self-Study Tool: Appreciating the Continuous Process Learning and Improvement](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This guide is designed for leaders to assess their progress in making school climate improvements.

Related resources from the field

- California—[Climate Connection Toolkit: Low and No-Cost Activities for Cultivating a Supportive School Climate](#) (2nd ed.; S3)
 - This toolkit from the California Department of Education includes no- and low-cost practical, hands-on activities for engaging staff, students, and other school community members in school climate initiatives.
- Michigan—[Social Media Plan](#) (S3)
 - This brief summary describes Michigan’s plan to use social media to promote its think-respect initiative and educate and encourage all audiences to support the think-respect initiative at their schools.
- [Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools](#) (National Charter School Resource Center [NCSRC])
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.2: Form a core planning team using a multi-tiered framework

Purpose of forming a core team

Your core planning team will lead the school climate improvement effort. The core planning team’s goal is to facilitate the process of establishing and launching the initiative, create buy-in from stakeholders, and model what will be expected from schools. The core planning team helps establish the school climate vision and mission and prioritizes evidence-based strategies using a multi-tiered framework. In addition, the team provides oversight to the district or school to ensure strategies are being implemented with fidelity and makes any necessary midcourse corrections

Strategies for forming a core planning team

- a. Form a core planning team that includes instructional and noninstructional staff, youth, families, and community members who understand the relationship of school climate to academic outcomes.

SELECTING A CORE PLANNING TEAM



Led by district-level staff and composed of school administrators and teachers from a diverse range of schools, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, governing board members, community members, and students, if possible



Led by teachers and composed of a school administrator, specialized instructional support personnel, parents, community members, and district staff and students, if possible

- 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)

- b. Ensure that the team is composed of diverse stakeholders who represent the groups in the school community.
- c. Coordinate with other teams, programs, or offices already in place (e.g., school improvement team or school discipline committee) to ensure that this is not a stand-alone team. For example, have members from these other teams be members of the new team to build on related efforts and avoid starting from scratch. Connect to *Objective 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative.*
- d. Recruit individuals with skills that are essential to the success of the initiative (e.g., relationship/networking, communication, and conflict resolution skills; and “big-picture” thinkers and doers).
- e. Identify clear expectations of the roles and responsibilities of the core planning team members, making certain that there are overlapping responsibilities. This approach will ensure members are well positioned to assume the duties of anyone who might leave the team, which promotes sustainability.
- f.  Prioritize the district’s school climate priorities and facilitate school-level teams to participate in the improvement efforts.

1.1.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Defined and assigned roles and responsibilities (e.g., chairperson, secretary, community outreach, and general membership)
- Meeting schedules, objectives, and agendas; schedule meetings frequently enough to keep momentum going but not so frequently that staff feel overburdened
- Communication plans based on specific stakeholder groups, for example, other district- or school-level staff, students, families, community members (*Connect to Objective 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate” and Objective 1.1.7: Articulate vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and guidelines for the proposed effort at multiple tiers.*)

Related resources for forming a core planning team

- [Asking the Right Questions: A Leader’s Guide to Systems Thinking About School Improvement](#) (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning, Aurora, Colorado)
 - This guide provides a framework for strategic thinking about schools in three domains: technical, personal, and organizational. It provides examples of identifying initiatives and then using discussion guides to determine the implications the initiatives may have across the three domains.
- [Roles and Responsibilities: Building Positive Schools Climate and Providing Learning Supports for Students](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This guide outlines the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the school climate improvement process. Having a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities can help you create a well-rounded and representative core team for improving school climate.
- [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 the roles of team members.

- [The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies From the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System \(Policy Statement 1\)](#)

(The Council of State Governments Justice Center)

- This resource can help you determine which offices, community groups, and individuals would be helpful for building relationships and using discipline practices in a way that reduces suspensions and escalation of discipline into the court system.

Related resources from the field

- Arizona—[Leadership Core Team Commitment Pledge Form](#) (S3)
 - This pledge form facilitates a unified, committed team, oriented around a clear set of goals and responsibilities. Signing a pledge with clear commitment guidelines will improve buy-in and follow-through, which increases fidelity.
- Arizona—[Leadership and Teaming Resources](#) (S3)
 - This leadership and teaming collection of resources (nested on a page with multiple resources) provides guidance on successful teaming and includes examples of tools such as an agenda template, a team charter, and a guide to roles and responsibilities.
- Iowa—[Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate](#), pages 6–8
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate”

Purpose of developing and communicating a shared understanding

To facilitate the planning process, the responsibilities of your core planning team should include fostering the development of the district’s or school’s shared understanding of school climate. You also may want to simultaneously address *Objective 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input* to engage all stakeholders within this process. The team and stakeholders should review research on school climate and conditions for learning, including effective practices in school climate improvement work. The team and stakeholders should use this research to support the development of the district’s or school’s definition of school climate, including the multiple dimensions of school climate (the topic areas of [school climate](#)) and the key components for improving school climate in which you will participate.

- 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)

Strategies for developing and communicating a shared understanding

- a. Compile selected research so that it is easily accessible by format (online or in hard copy) and by language. Connect to *Objective 1.1.7: Articulate vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and guidelines for the proposed effort at multiple tiers.*
- b. Set aside time for core planning team members to review research on school climate and provide multiple opportunities to share questions and feedback.
- c. Consult with school climate experts (through teleconference) and allow time for questions.
- d. Synthesize the research that the core planning team will use to inform the district's and school's common understanding of school climate and effective practices that could be used in the school climate improvement work.
- e.  Determine whether all schools will use the same definition of school climate or whether schools will have the autonomy to develop their own definition of school climate.
- f.  Determine the research and knowledge that will be shared and the structures and processes that the district will put in place to help individual schools participate in school climate improvements.

1.1.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A document that describes the district and school definition of school climate
- A document that outlines key research-based practices to improve school climate
- Meetings or presentations for stakeholders (core planning team outlines definition and research-based practices, and stakeholders provide feedback)
- Staff professional development events

Related resources for developing and communicating a shared understanding

- [*Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and Its Measurement in Turnaround Schools*](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains 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.
- [*National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments*](#)
 - NCSSLE is composed of school climate experts who are able to answer questions related to your school climate efforts.
- [*School Citizenship Education Climate Assessment*](#) (Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship)
 - This survey, developed by the Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship, is an anonymous self-assessment for administrators, teachers, parents, and other K–12 community members. The self-assessment measures the quality of school climate in seven categories, with special attention given

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)



to aspects of school climate that foster high-quality citizenship education. This self-evaluation tool can help inform a shared understanding of how to improve school climate among leadership.

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)

- [*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.
- [*School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability*](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This practice brief provides information about school climate standards; research; measurement and analysis; and key topic areas such as moral and social development, inclusion, dropout prevention, and so on.
- [*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.
- [*Communication Planning for Sustainability and the 8-Step Communication Planning Model*](#) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Communication and Social Marketing Center)
 - This guide includes an eight-step communication planning model to help you develop a communication strategy that will increase the sustainability of your programs.
- 2011 Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) National Conference: Communicating for Success
 - The following presentations describe how to turn school climate data into stories about a school's improvement efforts, which may increase buy-in among stakeholders.
 - [*Communicating School Climate Data*](#)
 - [*Communicating for Success: Using Data-Driven Stories to Move Audiences to Action*](#)
- [*School Climate: Research, Policy, Practice, and Teacher Education*](#) in *Teachers College Record* (National School Climate Center)
 - This article on school climate presents research, policy, and teacher education and practice as it relates to school climate. The research on these areas supports the need to integrate positive school climate practices at multiple tiers.
- [*Gauging the System: Trends in School Climate Measurement and Intervention*](#) in *The Handbook of School Violence and School Safety: International Research and Practice* (O'Malley, Ritchey, Renshaw, & Furlong; 2012)
 - This paper discusses the definition of school climate, the challenges of measuring school climate, what benefits are associated with good school climate, and strategies for assessing school climate.
- [*Organizing Schools for Improvement*](#) (Phi Delta Kappan International)
 - This resource provides a framework created from a study of Chicago schools that successfully turned their schools around. The framework consists of five essential

supports for school improvement: a coherent instructional guidance system, professional capacity, strong parent-community ties, a student-centered learning climate, and leadership-driven change.

- Interventions to Promote Safe and Supportive School Climate in the *Handbook of Social Influences on Social-Emotional, Motivation, and Cognitive Outcomes in School Contexts* (Taylor & Francis)
- Assessment of Climate and Conditions for Learning in the [*Handbook of Social Emotional Learning*](#) (Guilford Press)
- [*Charter School Discipline Toolkit: A Toolkit for Charter School Leaders*](#) (NCSRC)
 - The NCSRC presents a toolkit on ways that school leaders can rethink student discipline and school climate. The five enabling factors in the planning and implementation of discipline reform include (1) defining the scope of change, (2) creating a vision, (3) driving commitment to change, (4) revising policies and procedures, and (5) sustaining change. Each section of the toolkit also includes links to specific resources to assist schools in implementation.

Related resources from the field

- California—[*School Climate and Academic Performance Across California High Schools*](#) (S3)
 - This fact sheet highlights a study of more than 700 California high schools that demonstrated the positive relationship between positive school climate and academic performance in schools. This study can support efforts to create buy-in among stakeholders that school climate improvement is a valuable endeavor.
- California—[*Positive School Climate: A Hallmark of Academically Successful Schools*](#) (S3)
 - This fact sheet describes the result of California’s analysis of the relationship between positive school climate in schools and those schools’ overall academic performance. Demonstrating that schools academic performance has been shown to increase with positive school climate may help garner buy-in from stakeholders.
- California—[*The School Climate Report Card Webinar*](#) (S3)
 - This webinar offers a discussion of *California’s School Climate Report Card* that the California Department of Education developed for its S3 grant and how to use it to identify areas of school climate in need of improvement.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative

Purpose of assessing organizational capacity

To execute a successful school climate effort, establish realistic expectations for the work. To start setting these expectations, the core planning team can begin by assessing the organizational capacity—including any potential partners—to undertake the school climate effort. Beginning the improvement efforts can be time and labor intensive (especially given staff members’ competing

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)



- 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)

demands for time and potentially different attitudes about the importance of school climate efforts), but it has the potential to produce substantial results for students and teachers. Effective organizational assessments include motivational readiness and the organizational capacities of the district, its schools or of a particular school, and of individuals. This assessment also includes the identification and confirmation of who can do the work, how it can get done, and what resources or supports are needed. This objective does not include the systematic collection of school climate data, which is done during Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data. You first want to determine your capacity to implement the effort prior to collecting data.



A key factor in assessing the organizational capacity of districts and CMOs/EMOs is to develop school climate improvement approaches specific to different types of districts, CMOs, or EMOs: (a) stand-alone moderate-sized communities (10–30 schools) that have a big enough budget for school counselors, psychologists, and coaching; (b) large communities that often have high staff, administrator, and leadership turnover (which will change how midlevel staff are trained and how policy develops); and (c) small communities that have fewer support structures.



At the district or CMO/EMO level, it also is important to determine how many schools can be provided with quality supports and services.

Strategies for assessing organizational capacity

- a. Prioritize those aspects of school climate improvements that your organization wants to focus on, taking into account organizational capacity as well as time and resource limitations. When necessary, develop a plan to improve capacity. Capacity includes the motivation of key participants (e.g., sense of urgency or belief in how improving school climate contributes to district and school goals); general capacity (e.g., organizational efficiency); and school climate specific capacity (e.g., the capacity to collect and analyze data). Connect to *Objective 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate.”*
- b. Emphasize existing or potential strengths that support a positive school climate across the district or school.
- c. Identify the resources that are available and brainstorm additional potential resources that could help address needs.
- d. Determine if there is a gap between school climate needs and available resources (connect with Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data).

1.1.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A chart outlining school climate needs in order of priority
- A document indicating organizational assets and readiness to implement school climate assessment and improvements
- A chart outlining available and needed partners and resources
- A list of potential contacts or external organizations that can support the efforts
- A document that shows how school climate is aligned with other state, district, and school initiatives

- e. Assign individuals to reach out to potential external partners (e.g., other districts or schools, universities, colleges, or community-based organizations) that can share information and resources.
- f. Explore how this work can align with and leverage federal, state, district, foundation, and school efforts.
- g. Determine staff attitudes and beliefs about school climate and determine their sense of urgency and what is important to them.
- h.  Estimate the number of schools that could be supported, given the availability of resources within your district.
- i.  Brainstorm how you will help schools if an individual school is leading the improvement process.

Related resources for assessing organizational capacity

- [The General Organizational Index](#) (Lynne, Finnerty, & Boyle; n.d.)
 - School climate teams use this index to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented programs, as well as the capacity an organization has to implement and sustain programs.
- [The Organizational Climate Measure](#) (Patterson et al.; 2005)
 - The Organizational Climate Measure is used to evaluate a school's organizational climate and effectiveness by looking at managerial practices, productivity, and innovation. The measure provides information to help determine a school's readiness for change. See pages 405–407.
- [TCU Organizational Readiness for Change \(TCU ORC\) Scale](#) (Texas Christian University Institute for Behavioral Research)
 - The Organizational Readiness for Change scale by the TCU Institute for Behavioral Research has two scales, one designed for counseling staff and the other designed for directors and supervisors. The scale focuses on needs, resources, staff qualities, and organizational climate.
- [Willing, Able → Ready: Basics and Policy Implications of Readiness as a Key Component for Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief defines organizational readiness and the three components readiness is composed of: motivation of people in the organization, organizational capacities (general functioning), and intervention specific capacities (conditions that support a specific intervention).
- [Organizational/Partnership Functioning & Change Readiness: 24 Assessment Tools](#) (National Child Welfare Workforce Institute)
 - This summary document, developed by the National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors Research Institute and National Child Welfare Workforce Institute,

- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

lists a variety of readiness measures that are linked to summaries to help you determine which measures fit your school's needs and setting.

Related resources from the field

- Missouri—[Show Me Am I Ready Scale](#) (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services)
 - This tool, created by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, is a self-assessment that is designed to guide thoughtful discussion about readiness to implement a program and ways to enhance readiness.
- [Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools](#) (NCSRC)
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers

Purpose of reviewing data and current interventions

To build on your organizational capacity to engage in school climate improvements, you should develop an inventory of current school climate interventions and practices (e.g., evidence- or research-based programs, practices, approaches, and policies) and ongoing processes (e.g., data collection and analysis). The inventory should include the population or subpopulations of students or stakeholders these programs, services, and policies serve or target. There are two reasons for doing so. The first is to determine whether they are being implemented as intended and whether they appear to be having their intended effect. The second is to avoid fragmentation and enhance synergies. Your district, CMO/EMO, or school may already have multiple initiatives that address various aspects of school climate (e.g., [PBIS](#), [response to intervention](#), [school discipline policies](#), [restorative practices](#), [social and emotional learning](#)).

Strategies for reviewing current interventions

- a. Determine current interventions your school(s) is implementing on topics.
- b. Describe the objectives of current interventions, breadth of implementation, and any information on implementation quality and outcomes.

What Is a Multi-Tiered Approach?

Students need varying levels of support to successfully navigate the schooling experience. A multi-tiered approach helps identify those strategies that help all students learn in an environment that is safe, supportive, and engaging for them. Thus, multiple tiers reference those supports that are provided to all students (e.g., classroom instruction [Tier 1]); small-group services provided to a select group of students (Tier 2); and intensive, individualized services for those students who are in most need (e.g., individual counseling [Tier 3]), as well as services specific to subgroups of students who may need additional supports to feel safe and welcome in order to succeed. This information can be determined by disaggregating data.

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)



- c. Crosswalk current interventions with each other to determine the degree of their alignment and identify gaps in relation to the needs of your district, CMO/EMO, or school.
- d. [If you have current survey data] Review the most recent survey data of your state, district or CMO/EMO, and school(s), if available, to determine needs.

1.1.5 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Documents summarizing interventions currently in place, organized by topic areas of climate, population the intervention targets, and any information about implementation quality

Related resources for reviewing data and current interventions

- [Civil Rights Data Collection](#) (U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights)
 - Public schools and school districts are required to respond to the Civil Rights Data Collection to report data on key education and civil rights issues in our nation’s public schools.
- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.
- [Safe Supportive Schools/EDSCLS Model](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This framework highlights components of school climate and how the use of assessment and data can demonstrate a school’s strengths, needs, and progress.
- [Resource Mapping Tool](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This tool helps identify existing programs, and what tier they address (universal versus targeted supports), in your school, district, and community that address the priority need or issue you identified in your review of quantitative and qualitative data. Mapping resources supports many processes in school climate improvement efforts, such as identifying gaps in services, logic model development, and deciding which evidence-based programs to implement.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Practices](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This brief provides a framework for identifying key pieces of information you should know to select EBPs. It includes information on identifying EBPs, determining readiness to implement, tracking outcomes, and monitoring fidelity. In the appendix, key questions are summarized in a discussion guide, along with worksheets and resources to help you select an EBP that meets your needs.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for Schools Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module presents strategies and tools for identifying and selecting EBPs for school settings.

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)

- 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)

- [“A Comprehensive Approach to Promoting Social, Emotional, and Academic Growth in Contemporary Schools”](#) (*Best Practices in School Psychology V*, Volume 4)
 - This article presents research on effective practices for creating, supporting, and sustaining social, emotional, and academic growth in students in K–12 schools.
- [The Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports](#) Website (Office of Special Education Programs Technical Assistance Center)
 - This website provides more information about what a multi-tiered system of supports can look like within the school, family, and community.

Related resources from the field

- Iowa—Continuum Mapping Tools (S3)
 - [Learning Supports—Guide for Continuum Mapping](#)
 - This guide describes how continuum mapping helps schools and districts view the myriad of learning supports that are available to students (e.g., activities, programs, initiatives, and services) and identify which students should receive those supports. The guide also contains a continuum mapping tool to help schools and districts to further discussion about what learning supports are available to students, align those supports with goals, simplify duplications, and identify gaps in supports.
 - [Learning Supports 3-Dimensional Graphic](#)
 - This graphic is a visual depiction of the Learning Supports initiative framework for a successful school. This graphic can help you use the continuum mapping tool.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.6: Identify already administered school-based surveys, including and beyond school climate

Purpose of identifying already administered surveys

The staff and students in your district, CMO/EMO, or school(s) are likely taking multiple surveys per year across a variety of topics for multiple reasons (e.g., educator evaluations, research, or the evaluation of current programs). Efforts to improve your school climate could be improved by identifying opportunities to capitalize on existing survey efforts and eliminate duplication or undue burden on schools, staff, and students. Obtaining a better understanding of the surveys that are being implemented within the district or school can make it easier to (1) analyze the alignment between school climate and other initiatives within the school and (2) potentially reduce the burden on staff and students from taking multiple surveys if there is considerable overlap.

 At the district, charter authorizer, or CMO/EMO level, it also is important to consider which entity will collect, store, and analyze data. Similarly, it is important to consider if the same data will be collected across the district/CMO/EMO or if schools will be able to select their own data sources.

Strategies for identifying already administered surveys

- a. Identify the surveys that are currently being collected across interventions identified through *Objective 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers* to leverage data points.
- b. Summarize available data, organized by topics or indicators in relation to your definition of school climate, as well as categorize other topic areas assessed by survey data.
- c. Evaluate how comprehensive and useful current survey data are in relation to your definition of school climate.
- d. Review information about the survey data (e.g., sources, strengths, and gaps in current data, how often the data are collected, and populations covered).
- e. Determine whether to subtract, add, or modify current surveys if possible and appropriate. These decisions may include balancing a variety of factors, including demonstrated validity; comparability with local, state, and national data; and maintaining data trends.
- f. Evaluate the success of past survey administrations and whether data were and are being used effectively.
- g. Discuss the advisability and feasibility of administering surveys at the state, district, or school level (if they are not already in place).
- h. Join forces with other efforts (e.g., surveys for evaluation or research purposes) when efficient and appropriate to do so and consider the timing of data collection (e.g., collect school climate data in the spring or, if necessary, collect at other times, well enough into the school year that students, staff, and families have a sense of the climate in the school).
- i.  Determine whether all schools in the district or CMO/EMO will collect the same data from the same sources and who will collect those data (district or school).

1.1.6 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Documents summarizing currently implemented surveys
- Documents summarizing the purpose, population, timing, and response rate of each survey
- Documents summarizing how the data are being used
- Documents summarizing what current survey data revealed about school climate, organized by domains of climate (e.g., safety, engagement, and environment)
- Documents summarizing recommendations for future surveys to include items or scales on school climate, as well as a plan to administer surveys across constructs for the district or school

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)



- 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)

Related resources for identifying already administered surveys

- [Survey Development](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers multiple considerations involved in developing and using climate surveys and measures, from item creation, to piloting, to benchmarks, to the final survey.
- [School Climate Survey Compendium](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This compendium allows school or district staff members to inventory currently used valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate to help consider what they can use to fill in gaps. This list, maintained by NCSSLE, assists educators with their efforts to identify and assess the conditions for learning.

OBJECTIVE 1.1.7: Articulate vision, goals, objectives, action steps, and guidelines for the proposed effort at multiple tiers

Purpose of articulating vision, goals, and guidelines

The core planning team synthesizes the research on school climate and reviews current school climate data to help structure the vision for the work, articulate the purpose and goals of the effort, and translate it into action. The vision, purpose, and goals are intended to drive the school climate improvements at multiple tiers and provide a common language among the core planning team, other relevant school and district teams, and the district and school community. Developing a common language among the team can facilitate efforts at obtaining buy-in and input from stakeholders. In addition, it can guide the selection and support of evidence-based strategies to be implemented within your district, CMO/EMO, or school (see Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions [Activity Set 4]), as well as what you will use to monitor progress and evaluate your school climate improvements (see Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements [Activity Set 5]). It is important to obtain input from your community members and stakeholders prior to finalizing your vision, goals, and objectives.



District/CMO/EMO core planning teams should decide how the vision and mission should be used by schools—do schools need to use the school climate vision set by the district/CMO/EMO or, if using their own vision, ensure that it aligns with the district/CMO/EMO?

Strategies for articulating vision, goals, and guidelines

- a. Convene the core planning team to develop the overarching vision, goals, and guidelines for the initiative, using the research collected on school climate. Connect to *Objective 1.1.3: Develop and communicate a shared understanding of “improving school climate”* and *Objective 1.2.2: Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices with other important initiatives.*

1.1.7 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Event plans and collateral, materials, and talking points to obtain input from members of your school community
- A document articulating a vision statement and goals endorsed by the core planning team

- b. Identify what aspects of school climate are important, why they are, and how you plan to get where you want to go when determining your school climate vision and mission. Ensure that you develop clear and concise language—do not be vague.
- c. Outline the background, target audience, proposed activities, and desired outcomes for the initiative.
- d. Plan how you will share your vision and obtain input from all members of your school community (see *Objective 2.1.2: Develop a shared understanding among stakeholders and obtain stakeholder input*).
- e. Plan events, material dissemination, and talking points to obtain input from the community on the vision and goals.
- f.  Develop the district/CMO/EMO-level vision and objectives and communicate how it intends to support schools in developing school climate initiatives, including the types of tools, resources, and processes the district/CMO/EMO intends to use.

Related resources for articulating vision, goals, and guidelines

- [Training and Technical Assistance Services](#) (NCSSE Webpage)
 - This webpage connects you to technical assistance specialists and key resources available through NCSSE. The center provides state, district, and school administrators, teachers, school support staff, communities, families, and other stakeholders with culturally and linguistically competent, customized, technical assistance and training in the areas of assessment of conditions for learning, as well as in the implementation of evidence-based programmatic interventions. NCSSE also provides webinars, conferences, learning events, training modules, and other products and tools.
- [Charter School Discipline Toolkit: A Toolkit for Charter School Leaders](#) (NCSRC)
 - The NCSRC presents a toolkit on ways that school leaders can rethink student discipline and school climate. The five enabling factors in the planning and implementation of discipline reform include (1) defining the scope of change, (2) creating a vision, (3) driving commitment to change, (4) revising policies and procedures, and (5) sustaining change. Each section of the toolkit also includes links to specific resources to assist schools in implementation.

Plan for School Climate Improvement Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 2 [1.2])

Thinking about how to sustain your school climate efforts should be done upfront. As such, planning should address how to create school climate policies, routine practices, and systems that integrate within your current systems. Sustainability occurs when your efforts thrive independently from the individuals currently overseeing the effort or if the current funding you have for school climate improvement ends. To ensure sustainability, you can develop the structures and policies that need to be established that will become routinized and institutionalized through district and school policy. Action Step 2 of the Planning Activity Set provides four goals that will help you think strategically about initiating sustainability efforts and continuing them in the future.

OBJECTIVE 1.2.1: Plan to put clear school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies in place within the school improvement plan

Purpose of incorporating the school climate effort into the school improvement plan

Districts, CMOs/EMOs, and schools are generally required to complete improvement plans. Because this structure is commonly used to guide district, CMO/EMO, or school initiatives and priorities, incorporating school climate and a multi-tiered system of student supports within this plan can help institutionalize and embed the efforts to improve your school climate. Outlining your school climate efforts within your improvement plan can facilitate sustainability if it focuses on key responsibilities, activities, and work that would not necessarily be contingent on a funding stream. When developing your plan, consider the different types of resources (e.g., support staff or guidance from state, charter authorizer, or district leaders) and structures (e.g., restorative discipline policies or data infrastructure) you will need to ensure a positive school climate for all students and staff. New charter schools can use this same process during the charter application or preopening phase.

Strategies for incorporating the school climate effort into the school improvement plan

- a. Decide how school climate fits in with your improvement plan, as well as your other initiatives and priorities.
- b. Develop a work plan outlining responsibilities, with primary and alternate staff designated for each task.
- c. Cross-train multiple groups of staff and other stakeholders who are important to enacting components of the improvement plan to ensure that multiple groups and people possess the know-how to support improvements in school climate.

1.2.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- School improvement plan that incorporates school climate
- A work plan outlining responsibilities prepared with primary and alternate staff designated for each task.
- Co-training events for leadership pairs or teams

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)



- d. Ensure you have the needed staff to provide the tiered support important for serving all students. Revisit your staffing needs when you have more data on how the members of the school community experience the school—after you collect school climate data in *Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data (Activity Set 3)*.
- e. Work to ensure that school climate efforts are not contingent on infrequent funding streams (e.g., competitive grants). Instead, strive to make positive school climate, including conditions for learning, an ingrained feature of district and school policy and practice.

Related resources for incorporating the school climate effort into the school improvement plan

- [2012 Grantee TA Symposium: “Merging School Climate in Pursuit of Academic Excellence” \(S3\)](#)—see presentations and resources listed under “Sustainability” and “Sustaining Innovations.”
 - These presentations and worksheets provide strategies on how to sustain school climate and culture improvement and how to incorporate changes into long-term organization and fiscal plans.
- [Measuring School Climate](#) (NCSSLE Voices From the Field)
 - This post demonstrates how measuring school climate can help schools and districts make improvements. In particular, it identifies the relationship between conditions for learning and academic performance in an urban district that has used school climate surveys to target multi-tiered interventions since 2008.

Related resources from the field

- California—*Fact Sheets (S3)*
 - [School Climate and Academic Performance Across California High Schools](#)
 - This fact sheet highlights a study of more than 700 California high schools that demonstrated the positive relationship between positive school climate and academic performance in schools. This study can support efforts to create buy-in among stakeholders that school climate improvement is a valuable endeavor.
 - [Positive School Climate: A Hallmark of Academically Successful Schools](#)
 - This fact sheet describes the result of California’s analysis of the relationship between positive school climate in schools and those schools’ overall academic performance. Demonstrating that schools’ academic performance has been shown to increase with positive school climate may help garner buy-in from stakeholders.
- Maryland—[MDS3 Resource Binder, Integration of Behavior and Academics](#)
 - This series of resources provides tools and outlines ways to align academic achievement goals with positive school climate goals.
- [Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools](#) (NCSRC)
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.



OBJECTIVE 1.2.2: Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices with other important initiatives

Purpose of aligning the effort with other initiatives

To institutionalize school climate efforts, it is important to align school climate and multi-tiered systems of support with other important initiatives. Rather than thinking of school climate–related processes as something additional that educators “have to do,” connecting them to building conditions for learning, promoting attendance, and other initiatives already in place will reduce burden, improve efficiencies connected to implementation, and develop buy-in of new efforts. You should ensure that school climate practices are seen as a critical ingredient to effective instruction (e.g., include inclusive practices as a part of regular instruction) and are treated as an ongoing effort that is integrated into school and classroom policies and practices. Through *Objective 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers*, you identified interventions specific to school climate that were already being implemented. With the current objective, you will align how school climate efforts and interventions work with and support other important initiatives within the school.

Examples of relevant initiatives that you may want to consider connecting to include attendance promotion, dropout prevention, educator effectiveness, college- and career-ready standards, social and emotional learning, professional learning, deeper learning, and personalized learning.

Strategies for aligning the effort with other initiatives

- a. Align the vision and mission of school climate with other priority initiatives.
- b. Incorporate relevant school climate and multi-tiered student support policies and practices as part of the human resource protocol (see *Objective 1.2.3*).
- c. Enlist the core planning team to develop a list of behavioral and social and emotional expectations and standards for all members of the school community.
- d. Incorporate school climate and multi-tiered intervention and support practices within educator evaluations and corresponding feedback.
- e. Embed school climate priorities (e.g., student social and emotional skills and conditions for learning) within academic instruction.

1.2.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A document that aligns the vision and goals with other important initiatives occurring within the district or school
- A document that outlines the connection of other initiatives with school climate
- Documents related to relevant initiatives (e.g., evaluations, academic standards, and professional learning), and how those initiatives will incorporate climate

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- f. Institutionalize professional learning activities related to school climate (e.g., professional learning communities on climate, restorative practices, trauma sensitivity, cultural competence, and student and family engagement).

Related resources for aligning the effort with other initiatives

- [*SEL School: Connecting Social and Emotional Learning to Effective Teaching*](#) (Center on Great Teachers and Leaders [GTL Center])
 - The GTL Center provides tools and resources on how to incorporate social and emotional learning into educator evaluation systems and college and career readiness standards.
- [*Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional Practices That Support Social-Emotional Learning in Three Teacher Evaluation Frameworks*](#) (GTL Center)
 - This resource, from the SEL School in the GTL Center, provides frameworks that can help you evaluate ways that teachers are incorporating social and emotional learning into their classrooms.
- [*Avoid Simple Solutions and Quick Fixes: Lessons Learned From a Comprehensive District Approach to Improving Conditions for Learning*](#) (Osher, Poirier, Jarjoura, Brown, & Kendziora; 2013)
 - This paper describes the lessons learned by Cleveland Metropolitan School District when it incorporated Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies (PATHS) in its elementary schools to support social and emotional learning and how the district used the data it collected to assess success and make improvements.
- [*Charter School Discipline Toolkit: A Toolkit for Charter School Leaders*](#) (NCSRC)
 - The NCSRC presents a toolkit on ways that school leaders can rethink student discipline and school climate. The five enabling factors in the planning and implementation of discipline reform include (1) defining the scope of change, (2) creating a vision, (3) driving commitment to change, (4) revising policies and procedures, and (5) sustaining change. Each section of the toolkit also includes links to specific resources to assist schools in implementation.
- [*Charter School Discipline: Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts From the Field*](#) (NCSRC)
 - The report profiles four charter schools with innovative approaches to discipline: Health Sciences High and Middle College, KIPP Bay Area Schools, New Orleans College Prep Network, and Rowe Elementary School. The report presents each school's culture, discipline programs, results, and emerging issues.

Related resources from the field

- Tennessee—[*Incorporating Social and Emotional Learning Into Classroom Instruction and Educator Effectiveness: A Toolkit for Tennessee Teachers and Administrators*](#) (S3)
 - This toolkit provides teachers and administrators tools, videos, and strategies to help teachers implement teaching practices that promote student social and emotional skills in the context of their educator evaluation system.

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)

OBJECTIVE 1.2.3: Include questions about knowledge and experience with school climate and student support in job descriptions, interview protocols, and evaluations

Purpose of incorporating effort in personnel materials

Make school climate a priority for all new staff members. To accomplish this task, embed school climate and student support principles within the hiring process of district and school personnel. For example, place school climate roles and responsibilities within job descriptions—letting potential applicants know that promoting a positive school and classroom climate and differentiating supports for all students is a priority within the school or district. In addition, have applicants respond to questions about conditions for learning and addressing the whole child during their interviews—gauging their knowledge of and interest in school climate and student support as important components of education. Having applicants respond to question within the interview protocol will help districts and schools gauge how well an applicant will “fit” in a culture of positive school climate.

Strategies for incorporating effort in personnel materials

- a. Conceptualize the school climate effort not as linked to specific individuals or jobs but, instead, as attitudes, skills, and processes that students, staff, and other stakeholders will benefit from in the long-term.
- b. Incorporate school climate and student support priorities within job descriptions, as appropriate.
- c. Incorporate questions on school climate and student support practices during job interviews, as appropriate.
- d. Include consideration of applicants’ knowledge or beliefs about the importance of school climate and student support in the hiring process.

1.2.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Job descriptions that include school climate roles and responsibilities
- Hiring and personnel procedures that incorporate school climate and student support practices

Related resources for incorporating effort in personnel materials

- [*Recruitment, Selection, and Hiring for Disadvantaged Schools*](#) (GTL Center)
 - This toolkit from the GTL Center provides strategies and resources on recruitment, hiring, and the placement of educators through an equity lens.

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)



OBJECTIVE 1.2.4: Include relevant school climate and student support materials in orientation packets

Purpose of including relevant materials in orientation packets

In addition to including school climate data within the hiring process (see *Objective 1.2.3: Include questions about knowledge and experience with school climate and student support in job descriptions, interview protocols, and evaluations*), you can include school climate and student support materials in orientation packets for new staff—both those who are new to the profession and those who are transferring into your district or school. The orientation packet can include information about the pertinent school climate interventions (see *Objective 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data*) being implemented within your school. This information includes those policies, practices, and approaches that your district or school implement to continuously improve your school climate efforts, as well as the integrated tiered supports that are implemented to support all students. The orientation packets include information about interventions as well as the supports and structures that help educators improve their practices and implement interventions with fidelity.

Strategies for including relevant materials in orientation packets

- a. Determine which school climate and student support practices and interventions should be included within the orientation packet (see *Objective 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data*).
- b. Develop orientation training and materials that focus on school climate and student support policies and practices (use materials developed through *Objective 2.1.4: Conduct orientation activities for all school personnel* to help facilitate the process).
- c. Identify ways that new staff can become involved within the school climate and multi-tiered systems of supports within the district or school.
- d. Identify staff (typically members of the school climate team) who can keep school climate and student support materials up to date, as well as those who can mentor and coach new staff about policies and practices.

1.2.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- School climate and student support orientation packet

Related resources for including relevant materials in orientation packets

- [*MTSS: Connecting School Climate, Behavior Support and Academic Success*](#) (National PBIS Center)
 - This slide presentation demonstrates the how a multi-tiered system of supports links school climate, behavioral support, and academic success to create holistic and sustainable school climate change.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- 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)

Related resources from the field

- California—[Definition of MTSS](#)
 - This webpage explains the California Department of Education’s definition of multi-tiered system of supports and how it compares to response to instruction and intervention.
- Wisconsin—[Vision for Response to Intervention](#)
 - This webpage explains how high-quality instruction, balanced assessment, and collaboration systematically interact within a multi-level system of support as a structure to increase student success.

Develop Infrastructure and Plan for Collecting Data (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 3 [1.3])

The first two action steps in the Planning Activity Set focus on a core school climate leadership team engaging in activities to better understand the process for school climate improvements and beginning to develop structures to institutionalize your efforts. The third action step of planning is specific to school climate data. Composed of nine objectives, Action Step 3 helps you facilitate the development of an infrastructure to launch and sustain school climate improvements and school climate data efforts.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.1: Define which department in the state, district, or school administrative structure will oversee the initiative¹²

Purpose of defining the department with oversight

In the first action step of the Planning Activity Set, you define a core planning team and obtain buy-in from key leadership. The strategies within the current objective help define the administrative structure that will oversee and help fund the initiative.

d For districts, CMOs/EMOs, or multi-school initiatives, you will decide which department or office will oversee the school climate improvements. This approach will help clarify roles, responsibilities, and the administrative and fiscal channels needed to develop and sustain these efforts. Furthermore, determine how the lead office or department will work with other offices to support and sustain the school climate initiative because it is critical that these efforts are connected and supported across multiple district or school initiatives. (See *Objective 1.2.2. Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices with other important initiatives.*)

Strategies for defining the department with oversight

- a. Identify and determine all key individuals, departments, or agencies and their expected role or contribution.

¹² Objective 1.3.1 may not be applicable for single school initiatives.

- b. Identify systems to help coordinate future meetings with other offices that will help support and sustain school climate improvements.
- c. Coordinate with your budget office as well as contracts office to determine additional fiscal channels to support this work.

Related resources for defining the department with oversight

- [State/Grantee Profiles](#)
 - These profiles provide examples of S3 state grantees prior initiatives.
- [Example Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement](#) (Center for School Mental Health)
 - This example of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) is for school-based mental health centers but may be applicable to other non-mental-health partnerships.
- [Example Request for Proposal](#) (Center for School Mental Health)
 - This example of a request for proposal is for school-based mental health centers but may be applicable to other non-mental-health partnerships.

1.3.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Administrative authorization or endorsement
- An organizational chart describing administrative channels
- MOU describing the roles and responsibilities of the offices involved in the school climate improvement processes and potential external agencies or partners (e.g., local mental health authority, law enforcement, or juvenile justice)
- A document describing current funding as well as potential funding sources to support this work

OBJECTIVE 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators (or “theory of action”)

Purpose of developing a logic model or theory of action

The research collected during Action Step 1: Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements can inform your school climate theory of action. A theory of action describes the sequence of school climate activities, what the effort will do, and the outcomes or targets associated with the efforts. In other words, it demonstrates how the initiative will achieve the desired results, assess progress toward that goal, and determine how effective you are at meeting the desired goals. Generally, a theory of action is an “if-then” statement; however, a good theory of action describes targets, specific actions, and related outcomes. It includes the inputs (e.g., resources, staff, and funding streams), targets (e.g., your aim), the outputs (e.g., the activities and engagement practices that promote school climate), and the outcomes (e.g., the desired short-term and long-term results if you have the right target and appropriate intervention).



A district/CMO/EMO theory of action is different from a school theory of action because the district/CMO/EMO will focus on cross-office connections, support structures for schools, or district/CMO/EMO-wide outcomes.

Strategies for developing logic model or theory of action

- a. Incorporate the theory of action into regularly scheduled meetings with the core planning team and staff trainings.
- b. Use the research identified in Action Step 1: Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements to define inputs, targets, activities/ outputs, and desired outcomes/impacts as part of your theory of action.
- c. Identify indicators (measures) that align with your theory of action, which can be used to demonstrate progress.
- d. Use the indicators (measures) to evaluate each step in your theory of action (both process and outcomes evaluation; see Activity Set 5: Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements).
- e. [If federally funded] Align the model with required Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) indicators.

1.3.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A graphic representation of your theory of action
- A list of indicators and measures to help evaluate progress toward theory of action



Recommendations to help schools develop their school-specific theory of action.

Related resources for developing logic model or theory of action

- [*Project Prevent: Logic Model Development Process*](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar, originally designed to support Project Prevent grantees with creating logic models, is useful as an example of how to create a detailed logic model to guide the school climate improvement process. The webinar covers the purpose of creating a logic model, what it might look like, and how to use it.
- [*W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide*](#) (W.K. Kellogg Foundation)
 - This development guide presents the underlying principles of logic models and how to use models as a tool to plan, implement, and disseminate a program and its activities. Also, other templates and handbooks on related tasks such as strategic communications and evaluation are included.
- [*Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education*](#) (Institute of Education Sciences)
 - This guide helps education data teams turn data into strategic actions using a five-step framework, guided questions, and suggested activities. Education data teams using this guide will be able to facilitate meaningful conversations about data and next steps.
- [*Understanding Action Research*](#) (Center for Collaborative Action Research)
 - This resource presents the definition, theory, and model for action research that can support your school climate change process.

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)



- 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)

Related resources from the field

- Tennessee—[Developing a Logic Model Tip Sheet](#) (S3)
 - This tip sheet from the Vanderbilt University S3 center provides guidance to develop a logic model, including the core components of a logic model and the steps for putting a logic model together.
- Tennessee—[Safe and Supportive Schools Logic Model](#) (S3)
 - This sample logic model from the Tennessee Center for Safe and Supportive Schools at Vanderbilt University includes the inputs, outputs, and desired impact at each stage and level of intervention.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.3: Identify, adapt, or develop school climate surveys

Purpose of identifying school climate surveys

Collecting and interpreting school climate data is one of the primary ways to guide your school climate improvements. School climate surveys are a primary data source to assess school climate efforts and determine how students, staff, families, and community members perceive the climate of the school. Identify or develop survey tools that are most appropriate for your district or school population and that will yield data that inform approaches to improving and maintaining a positive school climate. In addition, select or develop survey tools that align to your theory of action regarding the importance of school climate and the outcomes that you are expecting. Although there are many valid and reliable school climate surveys available that you may use, one useful example may be the EDSCLS. The EDSCLS was developed with expertise, was piloted across the country, and produces actionable data.

1.3.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A list of valid and reliable survey tools appropriate for your student, staff, and family populations
- A checklist to decide which tool would be most helpful for your student, staff, and family populations
- An administration plan (see *Objective 3.1.1a: Develop an administration protocol for data collection*)
- A document that aligns survey instruments with the team's vision of school climate, the identified theory of action, and other school climate data sources

The EDSCLS is based on strong theoretical and empirical research and provides a Web-based platform containing a suite of school climate surveys for students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families, as well as survey administration and data reporting functions. The EDSCLS is the product of focus groups and a full-scale pilot test that were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the individual items and the resulting scales. This tool is free for any state, district, or school to use and will perform many of the functions outlined in this *Reference Manual* for you. For example, it contains scale scores that have not typically been used to assess school climate (e.g., cultural competence), and it provides data reports for you in a timely manner. For more information about the EDSCLS, see Activity Set 3A: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCLS Users, or go to <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>. For more information about how to collect and analyze other school climate surveys, see Activity Set 3B: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users.



Strategies for identifying school climate surveys

- a. Determine which domains and topic areas (constructs) of school climate will be measured.
- b. Decide whether to use the EDSCLS, to use another valid and reliable school climate survey, or to develop your own. If you are not going to use the EDSCLS:
 - Use valid and reliable school climate scales (you may, with permission, borrow from previously validated surveys). Review the NCSSLE [School Climate Survey Compendium](#) to review validated school climate surveys.
 - Allow time (up to a year) to conduct a pilot test if developing a new survey or modifying a scale from an existing survey (if necessary and appropriate). This time frame will help you establish reliability and validity of the items and constructs for your population.
 - Develop surveys that are both practical and actionable.
- c. Decide whether to administer the survey to all students or a sample of students; for staff surveys, decide whether to administer the survey to all staff or only teaching staff.
- d. Ensure that you sample adequate numbers of students from all subgroups if you decide to collect data from only a sample of your population.
- e. Demonstrate cultural and linguistic competence in survey design and plans for administration.
- f. Decide how many times per year the survey will be administered.
- g. Ensure that other data gathered to assess school climate (e.g., discipline, interview, or focus group data) align with the selected survey (e.g., use similar respondent characteristic groupings across data sources).

Related resources for identifying school climate surveys

- [U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This free Web-based administration platform includes a suite of school climate surveys for middle and high school students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and parents/guardians. The platform processes data and provides user-friendly reports. Education agencies administering the survey can store the data locally on their own data systems.
- [School Climate Measurement](#) (NCSSLE Webpage)
 - This webpage provides many relevant resources, including a compendium of school climate surveys and a webinar on assessment, sampling, and survey administration.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.

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)



- [Survey Development](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on the development of school climate surveys and measures. Content includes how to choose a survey, survey items, item testing, and survey format.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Increasing Staff and Family Survey Response Rates](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar provides effective practices and strategies for engaging school staff and families in school climate improvement initiatives and increasing survey response rates, particularly for engaging families and staff, especially those from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- [Evaluating the Reliability of Surveys and Assessments](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents ways to determine whether the survey items actually measure the underlying concepts they are intended to measure. Topics include the purpose and characteristics of reliability and its analysis, as well as common methods of reliability analysis for various types of data.
- [Project Prevent Webinar—What You Need to Know: Participation in the School Climate Survey](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This webinar presents information about EDSCLS, including what it measures, how to access and administer the survey, and how to use the results. Even if you do not choose to use this survey, it provides helpful guidelines when choosing and administering the survey(s) or items you would like to use.
- [School Climate Survey Compendium](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This compendium allows school or district staff members to inventory currently used valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate to help consider what they can use to fill in gaps. This list, maintained by NCSSLE, assists educators with their efforts to identify and assess the conditions for learning.

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[S3 School Climate Survey Video Appeal to Survey Respondents](#)
 - This is a Maryland S3 example of how one school appealed to survey respondents to encourage participation in the survey.
- Maryland—[S3 Posters](#)
 - These posters are another idea for encouraging response and providing information to participants who worked for Maryland S3 grantees.
- Maryland—[S3 Brochure](#)
 - This brochure is another way to encourage response and provide information to participants who worked for Maryland S3 grantees.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data

Purpose of selecting other types of data

Although surveys can provide a wealth of information on how students, staff, and families perceive school climate, other types of data can provide additional evidence about your school climate. For example, attendance rates inform the level of student engagement in school. In addition, data about specific behavioral incidents (e.g., bullying incidents) help you determine the rate at which these behaviors occur (see *Objective 3.1.5A: Collect and review school-level data related to school climate*). Schools and districts also are required to report information about school climate pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Information collected on school climate may help you prepare your responses to the CRDC survey. (More information about the CRDC can be found at crdc.ed.gov.)

Similarly, focus groups and interviews can help you dig deeper into why stakeholders perceive the school's climate the way they do (see *Objective 3.1.6: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families*). You also may want to include measures of student outcomes related to school climate (e.g., social and emotional skills).

Strategies for selecting other types of data

- Determine what other types of school climate data you already collect and how you can access them.
- Determine if there is a data gap between the school climate survey you chose and your theory of action; add items to your survey or other types of measures to address any gaps.
- Consult colleagues at other schools/districts to see what they collect and what has been valuable.
- Decide which other types of data you want to collect that might be helpful (e.g., interviews and focus groups; assessments of student social and emotional skills; and administrative data such as attendance, behavior, and suspensions/expulsions incident data).

1.3.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A list of other types of school climate data to collect

Related resources for selecting other types of data

- [*Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait*](#) (National Institute for Urban School Improvement)
 - This guide highlights how a focus group can be used to provide continuous outcome feedback. Covered in this resource is how a focus group is defined, created, and used as an evaluation tool.
- [*Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts*](#) (Colorado Education Initiative)
 - This toolkit from the Colorado Education Initiative provides tips for creating and using a focus group on page 14.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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

■ [*Understanding Student Discipline Practices in Charter Schools: A Research Agenda*](#)
(Center for Reinventing Public Education)

- This report describes the kinds of methods and data that will allow for useful sector comparisons, as well as other things you can learn from and about charter schools on the topic of discipline in schools.

Related resources from the field

- Michigan—[*Innovation Spotlights: Youth Engagement in Michigan*](#) (S3)
 - This article shares how Michigan S3 partnered with the Neutral Zone in Ann Arbor, Michigan, to facilitate a two-day institute (Student Engagement in School Reform), during which six high school teams of youth and school staff, along with Neutral Zone advisors and youth, conducted team-building exercises and small-group work to capture the student voice.
- Iowa—[*Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate*](#), Step 2: Describing the “Story” Behind Our Data
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data

Purpose of planning to collect and analyze data

Whether you are collecting survey data or other types of related data, create a plan on how to collect, manage, and analyze your data. Collecting and managing data can be unwieldy, so it is important to be strategic about how you will organize your data collection efforts prior to beginning them. For example, consider why you want to collect data—for decision making (e.g., to determine if new interventions are needed), progress monitoring (e.g., to determine how well an intervention is working), or continuous quality improvement purposes (e.g., to use progress monitoring data to make improvements to current interventions). Given the autonomous context in which they work, charter schools also should be mindful of what implications their authorizer’s monitoring and accountability practices may have on site—and CMO/EMO-level data collection, management, and analysis practices. Based on why you want to collect data, determine how often will you collect the various types of data—once a year, twice a year (to reflect possible district changes), three times a year (to reflect possible school-level changes)—or perhaps do a full assessment once a year and collect data on subscales throughout the year. In addition, consider the types of questions that you want your data to answer. This approach will help you determine when you want to collect your data, as well as the types of analyses that you will conduct. For example, annual school climate surveys generally take place in the spring so that respondents have an opportunity to experience the school environment prior to taking the survey (use your theory of

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)



action developed through *Objective 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators [or “theory of action”]* to help you develop the questions you want to answer). After you have decided the questions you want answered, think through the data analysis you will conduct. (If you do not have the available expertise in-house to analyze your school climate data, see *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)

Strategies for planning to collect and analyze data

- a. Develop a plan to collect data through school climate surveys that respect privacy and protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information that is provided through the survey. Alternatively, you can collect data through anonymous school climate surveys.
- b. Determine how often data collection should occur for each data source (surveys and other forms of data).
- c. Include a timeline for collecting survey data, taking into account when other kinds of assessments (academic assessments) are scheduled in the schools.
- d. Develop a sampling plan—should the entire population be surveyed or a representative subsample? If a sample, develop a plan to maximize the representativeness of your sample and to minimize selection bias.
- e. Develop a plan to collect the additional data you selected, noting those that are mandated for collection from government and other supervisory entities. Consider how you might align these data with other data that your school or district collects, and if you have a data dashboard, how to incorporate climate data in it. (See *Objective 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure [e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems].*)
- f. Incorporate the data collection plan in the administration protocol you create to ensure that data are collected consistently across each stakeholder group. (See *Objective 3.1.1A: Develop an administration protocol for data collection.*)
- g. Create an analysis plan that aligns the questions you will ask and the data you will collect (e.g., see climate items and dimensions in EDSCS).

1.3.5 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Survey data collection plan
- Focus group and interview data collection plan
- Administrative (e.g., attendance, behavior incidents, suspensions, or expulsions) data collection plan

Related resources for planning to collect and analyze data

- [Project Prevent Webinar: What You Need to Know: Participation in the School Climate Survey](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents information about EDSCS, including what it measures, how to access and administer the survey, and how to use the results. Even if you do not choose to use this survey, it provides helpful guidelines when choosing and administering the survey(s) or items you would like to use.

- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data). (See *Objective 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data.*)

Related resources from the field

- California—[Workbook for Improving School Climate](#)
 - This workbook is a companion resource to the California School Climate Health and Learning Survey System and was created to help school community members distill the key findings from their student and staff survey data.
- Louisiana—[Safe and Supportive Survey Planning and Administration Guidebook](#) (S3)
 - This guidebook for the Louisiana Department of Education discloses statewide survey results from their school climate survey, test results of state tests, school and district report cards, school and district performance scores, district and state data reports, enrollment counts, high school and career and college readiness, state equity plan and reports, teacher effectiveness reports, and information pertinent to protecting student privacy when collecting data.
- District of Columbia (DC)—[Memorandum of Agreement on Data Sharing](#)
 - This copy of the memorandum of agreement between DC’s Public Charter School Board and the Office of State Superintendent of Education provides for data-sharing school climate and related data.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.6: Develop a school climate index (optional)

Purpose of developing a school climate index

After you select a school climate survey and any other data sources that will help you assess your school’s climate, you have the option to develop a school climate index. A school climate index is a single number or score that can be derived from (1) a formula you develop based on only school climate survey data or (2) a formula that aggregates or combines multiple types of school-based data. In either case, it can help you obtain an overall picture of climate for an individual school and help see how schools compare within a district/CMO/EMO and, if statewide, across the state. Depending on your district/CMO/EMO or school context, you might want to weigh certain factors more heavily in your formula so they carry more weight in the overall index. At the district, CMO/EMO, or school level, this approach will provide a measure typically calculated by the district, CMO/EMO, charter authorizer, or state to assess progress in your improvement efforts that is comparable across years and across individual schools.



Strategies for developing a school climate index

- a. Review ways to calculate a school climate index, including examples of how others have done it.
- b. Consider inclusion of both positive measures (e.g., the percentage of students reporting that they like school [through surveys] and student social and emotional skills) and those things that may be concerns (e.g., attendance; infractions; and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use) when developing your school climate index.
- c. Include students, staff, and family members in the working group that develops the formula.
- d. Consult with a statistician or psychometrician to help determine the best approach in creating your school climate index formula.
- e. Note, if you are using EDSCLS: Instead of creating a school climate index formula, you can use the benchmarking study results to help facilitate the meaning of your scale scores, available in fall 2017.
- f.  Determine the school climate data that will be required of all schools to collect versus those that are recommended.
- g.  Use the “required” school climate data to include within the school climate index.
- h.  Consider whether you want to include school-level demographics (e.g., size; elementary, middle, or secondary) within your index.

1.3.6 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A document with an index formula that can be used to compare school climate across years between individual schools

Related resources for developing a school climate index

- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar discusses effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [School Safety Score Considerations: Construction, Quality, Utility](#) (S3)
 - This presentation covers how to develop a school climate score by considering policy, data, score content, score formula, and presentation.

Related resources from the field

- California—[The School Climate Report Card](#) (S3)
 - This webinar offers a discussion of California’s School Climate Report Card that the California Department of Education developed for its S3 schools and how to use it to identify areas of school climate in need of improvement.

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)



OBJECTIVE 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data

Purpose of planning to disseminate data findings

Along with developing a plan for the types of data you will collect and a plan for how you will analyze the data, you also should begin to think about how you will disseminate the findings from your school climate data collection. This plan can include how you will inform staff and the community of results, as well as how staff can use the results to improve school climate. The data and analysis that you present will depend on your planning decisions made in the previous objectives in Activity Set 1. If you are a district or school that uses the EDSCS platform to collect school climate survey data, you can use the benchmarking data to help facilitate the meaning of your scale scores, when the data are available in fall 2017.



For individual school efforts, you may want to use and update your communication strategies with your staff to disseminate findings, which also may include electronic mailing lists and websites.



If you are a district or CMO/EMO, for example, you might report out the data only for each school, or you might choose to include the district/CMO/EMO averages along with the school's results to provide a comparison point.

Strategies for planning to disseminate data findings

- a. Ensure that the plan for communicating data findings aligns with, or is included within, the overarching communication plan for the school climate effort.
- b. Ensure that data are communicated in a manner that helps stakeholders understand the data and know how to use their data for improvement efforts.
- c. Employ social marketing strategies to maximize the reach and effectiveness of your data communication efforts.
- d. Obtain feedback on the types of data reports that various audiences (e.g., administrators, staff, students, families, and community) need and their readiness to understand and receive the information.
- e. Plan the timelines for the release of various types of data findings (e.g., survey data are typically ready for release sooner than are the most recent school year's administrative data, which often are not ready until the following fall).
- f. Determine whether data analysis and reports will be released more frequently than once per year, which will depend on when data collection occurs across the multiple data sources.

1.3.7 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A written plan for dissemination, endorsed by the core planning team and any other senior officials, as appropriate; the plan includes specifics on how to reach various audiences
- A social media plan
- A list of workshops about how to disseminate information

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- g.  Determine whether you will want to host data workshops, in which multiple schools come together to examine and interpret their school climate data.

Related resources for planning to disseminate data findings

- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar describes ways to align results with outcome data and properly disseminate that 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 on school climate improvements.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure (e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems)

Purpose of developing or upgrading infrastructure

Consider developing or upgrading your technology infrastructure to support the implementation of activities to improve your school climate. For example, you may need to develop or update information systems and staff portals to support implementation of surveys, processing of data, and dissemination of results. (*Note:* If you use the EDSCLS platform, survey implementation, data processing, and reporting results will be done for you.) In addition, you may want to update your electronic mailing lists and websites to facilitate communication of your school climate improvements.

-  You may want to determine the district/CMO/EMO's data collection capacity and whether its current data collection mechanisms can be modified or adapted to incorporate schools' climate data.

Strategies for developing or upgrading infrastructure

- a. Consult with your own information technology staff because individual infrastructure configurations may be unique to each district and school.
- b. Ensure that the technology infrastructure addresses both data *collection needs* (e.g., how the data will be collected, where the data will be securely housed, and how they will be analyzed) and data *communications needs* (e.g., how stakeholders will receive information about the initiative, the data system, and the results).

1.3.8 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- New language and resources added to a portal, server, or webpage(s), depending on identified needs
- User guides for the resource structures
- Updated electronic mailing lists
- A list of personnel who will be responsible for overseeing and updating resource infrastructure

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)



- c. Pilot test any new systems that are developed and solicit end-user feedback on their experience interfacing with and using the new system.
- d. Ensure that the capacity of the infrastructure will support the data collection and analysis procedures you decided on through the strategies in *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data*.
- e. Ensure that the capacity of the infrastructure will support the communication and dissemination strategies you decided on in *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data*.
- f.  Determine the level of support that you can provide to your schools in collecting and housing school climate data that are consistently collected across the district/CMO/EMO/charter authorizer/state (e.g., surveys) versus school climate data that may be school specific (e.g., schools may document behavioral referrals differently across the district/CMO/EMO).

Related resources for improving resource infrastructure

- [Resource Mapping Tool](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This tool helps identify existing programs, and what tier they serve (universal versus targeted needs), in your school, district, and community that address the priority need or issue you identified in your review of quantitative and qualitative data. Mapping resources supports could reveal areas in which infrastructure could be improved or streamlined.

OBJECTIVE 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners (e.g., local universities)

Purpose of developing contracts and finding partners

At times, your district, CMO/EMO, or school may need support from other partners or contractors to assist you with your school climate improvements. The results from *Objective 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative* will help you determine those aspects of your school climate improvement process that may be best suited for partnering with outside organizations (e.g., universities or community organizations) or for outsourcing to contractors. When you reach out to external organizations that may be able to partner with your school, ensure that the services of the external organization match your vision and mission and can help you fulfill an identified gap. To select a contractor, work with your education agency contracts office to initiate an RFP (request for proposal) process to obtain proposals from vendors that will meet the needs of your district or school context.

 For individual schools, you may want to connect with other schools also participating in school climate improvements to leverage resources.

Strategies for developing contracts and finding partners

- a. Develop processes and practices to recruit and select community-based partners.
- b. Develop partnership agreements or MOUs with local partners.
- c. Develop RFPs that outline the statement of work, timelines, and deliverables for the work you would like to outsource.
- d. Develop standards and processes for selecting a contractor.

1.3.9 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Memorandum of understanding
- RFP(s) and announcement
- Signed contract
- Plan for work postcontract award

- e.  Issue the RFP prior to, or concurrently with, identification of schools to participate in school climate improvements, allowing enough time for the selected contractor to prepare for working with participating schools.
- f.  Depending on the activities you outsource, determine how participating schools will interact with the contractor and the level of support each school will need from the contractor.

Related resources for developing contracts and finding partners

- [*Choosing an Education Contractor: A Guide to Assessing Financial and Organizational Capacity*](#) (The Comprehensive School Reform Quality Center, American Institutes for Research)
 - This guide helps you determine what to look for, key questions to ask, where to find information about an organization, and red flags when determining the financial viability and organizational capacity of an education contractor you may want to partner with.
- [*State Initiatives to Improve School Climate and Discipline*](#) (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE])
 - This RFP by NASBE seeks applicants of state boards of education dedicated to improving school climate and student discipline.
- [*Model Memorandum of Understanding Between a School District and a Police or Sheriff's Department*](#) (Advancement Project)
 - This example MOU helps you see an example of what a model MOU looks like. This example focuses on an MOU between a school district and a police department.
- [*Example Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement*](#) (Center for School Mental Health)
 - This example of an MOU is for school-based mental health centers but may be applicable to other non-mental-health partnerships.
- [*Example Request for Proposal*](#) (Center for School Mental Health)
 - This example of a request for proposal is for school-based mental health centers but may be applicable to other non-mental-health partnerships.

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)



Assess Schools' Readiness, Needs, and Capacities (Activity Set 1, Action Step 4 [1.4])

In the fourth action step of the Planning Activity Set, you will assess the readiness, needs, and capacity of participating schools. Because each school is unique, each will likely have different strengths and areas of need. Thus, it will be important to assess where each is within the improvement process—what participating schools think about school climate, what they are doing, how well they are doing it, and what things they should be doing but are not. To determine your readiness, you will want to (1) determine the motivation (e.g., beliefs about the efforts and desire to adopt practices) of your stakeholders to engage in school climate efforts, and (2) determine your general organizational capacity (e.g., the culture, climate, staff capacity, and leadership of your district or school).



If you are a single school, you will not have to worry about the first objective within this action step (1.4.1) because the strategies within that objective focus on developing selection criteria for and actually selecting schools.



If you are a district or CMO/EMO, decide whether your efforts will be universal across the district (i.e., all schools in the district) or CMO/EMO school networks, or if only select schools or schools of a certain type (e.g., all high schools) will be able to participate. If you are implementing a universal approach, you will not have to worry about the first objective within this action step (1.4.1) because the strategies within that objective focus on developing selection criteria for and actually selecting schools.



OBJECTIVE 1.4.1: Develop selection criteria and select participating schools (If the initiative will not be universal)¹³

Purpose of developing criteria for selecting schools

If you are a district or CMO/EMO that plans to have a subset of schools participate in school climate improvements, you need to develop a process to select participating schools. The selection criteria can address the needs of the schools within your district, your organizational capacity to support this work, and the resources you have at your disposal. In addition, you will have to decide if you want to select schools based on their level of performance on a specific measure (e.g., standardized test scores or school climate scores) or based on an application process in which schools must, in effect, self-select to participate in these efforts.

1.4.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- An RFP for school participation
- A committee appointed with broad stakeholder representation, including school staff, community members, and youth, that determines selection criteria and selects schools
- Protocols and rubrics for the selection process
- An announcement that lists the schools that have been chosen to participate

¹³ Selecting schools may occur later in the process (e.g., after baseline data collection). Adapt this step or sequence as necessary.

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)



Strategies for developing criteria for selecting schools

- a. *If the district or CMO/EMO is selecting schools*, state the criteria for selection (e.g., schools with greatest need) and communicate the expectations of participating in the process.
- b. Identify schools that need support and could benefit from interventions.
- c. *If a district or CMO/EMO is allowing schools to apply*, develop an application that allows schools to demonstrate their readiness to participate in school climate improvements. Schools might demonstrate their readiness in a number of ways: (1) the capacity to collect, analyze, and interpret school climate data; (2) identified strengths and areas for improvement; (3) justifications for participation; and (4) team structures and activities that can support school climate efforts.
- d. Use the same criteria to select all schools. For those schools that apply, use a rubric to evaluate each applicant impartially.

Related resources for developing criteria for selecting schools

- California—[*List of Safe and Supportive Schools Participating Districts in California*](#) (S3)
 - This website by the California Department of Education offers information on how the state selected its 58 districts for its S3 initiative.

OBJECTIVE 1.4.2: Conduct a needs and resources assessment¹⁴

Purpose of conducting a needs and resources assessment

A needs and resource assessment is different from the assessment of organizational capacity. (See *Objective: 1.1.4: Assess organizational capacity to undertake a school climate initiative.*) A needs and resource assessment identifies resources and assets that will aid in prioritizing key issues rather than determining whether your district, CMO/EMO, or school has the capacity (e.g., resources and human capital) to implement the efforts. Furthermore, a needs assessment helps focus on systemic issues, links goals with hard data, and informs realistic planning for all stages of the initiative (e.g., survey development, selection of programmatic interventions, training, and technical assistance). In other words, the needs assessment helps you identify current structures and practices that promote your theory of action, as well as those structures, practices, and resources you need to more fully implement your theory of action. If you do not currently have school climate data that help you evaluate your needs and your assets, you may conduct your needs assessment later in the process after you have collected and analyzed data.

¹⁴ Depending on progress to date in launching this initiative, Objective 1.4.2 may take place later in the process as deemed appropriate. However, this information also might inform subsequent activity sets, action steps, or objectives.



Strategies for conducting a needs and resources assessment

- a. Develop and administer a needs and resources/assets assessment template.¹⁵
This template helps you organize your current data to determine what is working well and what are some challenges that need to be a key priority within your district, CMO/EMO, or school.
- b. Conduct focus groups with students, staff, and families that ask about needs and assets. Focus group protocols should attempt to garner information about their motivation to participate in the efforts and their perceptions about the general organizational capacity (e.g., climate, culture, leadership, and resources) to engage in the efforts.
- c.  *For the needs assessment*, analyze the school-level data of all schools in the initiative, as well as compare results among schools within your initiative.
- d.  *For the cross-school summary report*, list available survey, incident, and focus group data by school and provide a synthesis of the highest priorities for schools, as well as common themes.

1.4.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Needs and resources/assets assessment report from each school
- A summary report of information obtained from all participating schools

Related resources for conducting a needs and resources assessment

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 1: Understanding the Importance of School Climate and Engaging School Leadership in Its Improvement](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice engaging leadership into school climate improvements.
- [Beyond Needs Assessments: Identifying a Community's Resources and Hopes](#) (Learn and Serve, America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse)
 - This fact sheet discusses the importance of and ways of determining what a community has, wants, and hopes before conducting a service-learning project.
- [Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait](#) (National Institute for Urban School Improvement)
 - This guide highlights how a focus group can be used to provide continuous outcome feedback. Covered in this resource is how a focus group is defined, created, and used as an evaluation tool.
- [Sample Safe and Supportive Schools LEA Needs Assessment Template](#) (S3)
 - This template connects data from school teachers/staff, students, and parents to domains, interventions, and communication by creating a space that summarizes what

¹⁵ For example: Status of survey and incident data collection; needs and assets identified from a school's data; the scope of issues (e.g., How many schools or individuals are affected; does it differ by subgroup?); experience reporting on school safety and conditions for learning; experience using data to inform programming; current programmatic interventions and unmet needs for which interventions are desired; and training and technical assistance needed.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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

data they have, data they may need, what needs the data suggests there are, and how much that data are being used to choose and evaluate programs, as well as communicate needs to the district.

- [Resource Mapping Tool](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This tool helps identify existing programs, and what tier they serve (universal versus targeted needs), in your school, district, and community that address the priority need or issue you identified in your review of quantitative and qualitative data. Mapping resources supports many processes in school climate improvement efforts, such as identifying gaps in services, logic model development, and deciding which evidence-based programs (EBPs) to implement.

Related resources from the field

- Wisconsin—[Statement of Need Data Worksheet](#) (S3)
 - This worksheet helps you compare data with other data sets, specifically the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey.
- Colorado—[Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Districts and Schools](#)
 - This toolkit from the Colorado Education Initiative provides tips for creating and using a focus group on page 14.
- Iowa—Continuum Mapping Tools (S3)
 - [Learning Supports—Guide for Continuum Mapping](#)
 - This guide describes how continuum mapping helps schools and districts view the myriad of learning supports that are available to students (e.g., activities, programs, initiatives, and services) and identify which students should receive those supports. The guide also contains a continuum mapping tool to help schools and districts to further discussion about what learning supports are available to students, align those supports with goals, simplify duplications, and identify gaps in supports.
 - [Learning Supports 3-Dimensional Graphic](#)
 - This graphic is a visual depiction of the Learning Supports initiative framework for a successful school. This graphic can help you use the continuum mapping tool.

OBJECTIVE 1.4.3: Develop multi-tiered support approaches for students, staff, and families

Purpose of developing multi-tiered support approaches

Using the staff, student, and family needs assessment data conducted through *Objective 1.4.2: Conduct a needs and resources assessment*, develop multi-tiered approaches to address the varied needs of all members of your school community that allow everyone to participate in the effort. For example, the PBIS three-tier model is a helpful framework that groups need-based

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)



efforts into universal, selective, and targeted categories. Universal approaches can be both promotive and preventive, and they are applied to everyone in the school community. Selective approaches are focused on subgroups that could benefit from additional support. Targeted approaches are customized interventions for those who are experiencing continuous or severe needs.

Strategies for developing multi-tiered support approaches

- a. Use disaggregated needs assessment data to determine levels of need.
- b. Identify resources available to address particular needs in a multi-tiered manner.

Related resources for developing multi-tiered support approaches

- [*The National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports \(PBIS\)*](#)
 - This website, run by the National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS, established by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, offers resources and technical assistance that can help improve the capacity of states, districts, and schools to establish, scale up, and sustain the PBIS framework. Emphasis is given to the impact of implementing PBIS on the social, emotional, and academic outcomes for students with disabilities. The website includes information and resources for schools, communities, and families.
- [*Are School-Level Supports for Teachers and Teacher Collegiality Related to Other School Climate Characteristics and Student Academic Performance?*](#) (California Safe and Supportive Schools)
 - This fact sheet demonstrates that creating school climate change should include teachers' well-being to be successful. The fact sheet outlines how California measured teacher supports and well-being and its effect on school climate and student academic performance.
- [*Safe, Supportive, and Successful Schools Step by Step*](#) (American Institutes for Research)
 - This guide provides easy-to-follow steps for educators wanting to know more about how to implement a three-tiered approach to student support. Strategies presented address social, ethical, and emotional change for all students; early interventions for some students that exhibit minor behavioral issues; and intensive interventions for the few students in the school who have significant emotional or behavioral issues.

1.4.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List goals for improvement of interventions at each tier in all groups—staff, students, and families
- Logic model from Objective 1.3.2 reflects tiered interventions
- Policies and procedures that support tiered interventions



Districts/CMOs/EMOs select interventions that provide multi-tiered support



- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)**
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCSL Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCSL Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

Related resources from the field

- Louisiana—[*Programmatic Intervention Implementation Plans*](#) (S3)
 - This tool combines information regarding specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART) goals; school climate improvement focus areas; and intervention programs. The plans are intended to be updated annually.
- Kansas—[*Multi-Tier System of Supports Project*](#) (S3)
 - This website houses all of Kansas’s information about its multi-tier system of supports approach, including the overview and rationale, presentations, resources, and training connections.

Evaluate and Refine the Planning Process and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 1, ACTION STEP 5 [1.5])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practice. At the end of Activity Set 1: Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements, reflect on the plans that you and your team developed. Ensure that the plans are clear, are consistent, and contain accurate information. In addition, reflect on the time frame that you have set for your efforts, and whether it is doable based on your current capacity.

OBJECTIVE 1.5.1: Review planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability

Purpose of reviewing planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability

After you develop your school climate improvement plans, take a step back to review the plans, determine progress toward implementing those plans, and review the progress toward implementing the infrastructure outlined for institutionalization. This is a time for you to not only take stock of what you planned but also ensure that there is alignment among the plans that you made. This step helps ensure that you have continued alignment with your school climate efforts. Because your plans set the groundwork for your efforts, it is important to ensure that your plans are clear for continued success.

Strategies for reviewing planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability

- a. Review the plans developed thus far in the school climate improvements with an eye toward institutionalization and update those plans to ensure consistency across them.

1.5.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Updated plans with an eye toward institutionalization
- Progress reports on the status of implementing plans with sustainability in mind
- Alignment of documents to ensure consistency across plans
- Development of infrastructures that will help sustain the effort if key staff leave or the current funding stream disappears

- b. Review the progress made toward implementing the plans, specifically getting updated progress on the data infrastructure developed.
- c. Be sure plans and infrastructure align with goals for the sustainability of your school climate improvements.

Related resources for reviewing planning process and implementation of infrastructure for sustainability

- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar series addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. Content focuses on consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).
- [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 continuous buy-in from stakeholders for the school climate improvement process.
- [Charter School Discipline Toolkit: A Toolkit for Charter School Leaders](#) (NCSRC)
 - The NCSRC presents a toolkit on ways that school leaders can rethink student discipline and school climate. The five enabling factors in the planning and implementation of discipline reform include (1) defining the scope of change, (2) creating a vision, (3) driving commitment to change, (4) revising policies and procedures, and (5) sustaining change. Each section of the toolkit also includes links to specific resources to assist schools in implementation.

District or State Example of Planning Phase Activity Set

Iowa

Early in its planning, Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools (IS3) focused on two critical aspects: securing buy-in from students, staff, and the community (those affected by school climate) and setting up the necessary infrastructure for data collection.

- Iowa implemented communication efforts to publicize the launch of its work and [announced which schools were selected to participate through an application process](#). Strategically acknowledging entities involved in project planning helped to spread the word and get the schools and public interested in and excited about the work. Iowa's publicity included development of a [video](#) featuring its U.S. senator, state governor, and the Iowa Department of Education (DOE) director.
- Iowa's measurement system and reporting systems were not originally built to accommodate every school in the state. To sustain the IS3 annual process for schools, the data and reporting structures had to develop a data collection and reporting/portal system aligned with Iowa DOE databases.



Each IS3 project school had a Core Leadership Team, composed of administration, teachers, parents, and community members, to promote school-level ownership and decision making for the initiative. This team was responsible for implementing a continuous improvement process (CIP). The CIP included six steps: (1) determining an area of focus, (2) describing the story behind the data, (3) selecting a strategy, (4) detailing the action steps, (5) ensuring adults are doing what they need to do, and (6) knowing if it has made a difference. The Core Leadership Team developed an *IS3 Overview* document and frequently asked question sheets for use by grant teams and partner schools, as well as detailed job descriptions for school climate consultants and data analysts, broken down by percent time by activity.

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)

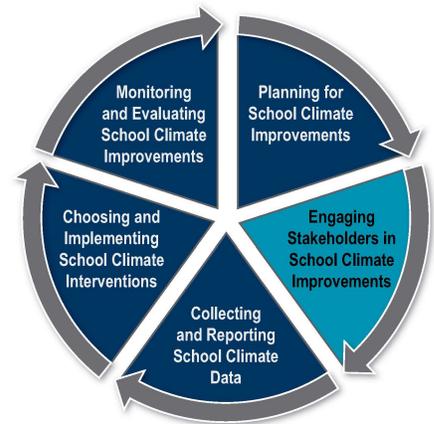
Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCLS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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

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

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)



- [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.

District level

- District superintendent, other administrators, staff, school boards

CMO/EMO

- Charter operators, executive director/CEOs, other administrators, staff, charter authorizers

School level

- Principal, other administrators
- Instructional staff
- Noninstructional staff (counselors; administrative, custodial, food service staff; school bus drivers; others)
- Students
- Families (parents/guardians)

Community partners

- Youth service groups
- Mental health organizations
- Other community-based organizations
- Foundations
- Community members





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

- a. 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.
- b. 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.

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)

Strategies for developing a shared understanding among stakeholders

- 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.
- Plan orientation sessions that allow stakeholders to review and discuss suggested resource(s).
- Provide opportunities for all stakeholders to give input on the vision, mission, and plans for the overall effort.
- Target communication efforts using social marketing strategies.
- 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.

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)

- f. Facilitate communities of practice¹⁶ 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

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.

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)



specifically for this initiative. Regardless of the makeup of the team, the school climate team should align with and collaborate with other teams leading other initiatives within the school. (See *Objective 1.2.2: Align relevant school climate and multi-tiered system of supports policies and practices to other important initiatives* to guide your efforts in identifying other initiatives and teams to connect with.)

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*.



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.

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.

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

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



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.

2.1.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Series of staff meetings or other orientation events (perhaps during professional development opportunities) and materials associated with the staff orientation
- Social media posts about orientation and meetings
- Orientation session feedback questionnaires

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)



- h.  Districts/CMOs/EMOs can conduct an initial, separate orientation for district leadership and coaches.

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

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



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.

2.1.5 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- School climate assemblies
- Small-group presentations to groups such as class officers
- Resources for staff to help them explain this initiative to students
- Expectations list codeveloped by students
- Resources to help students research and analyze school climate efforts
- List of student-suggested activities that will promote a positive school climate

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 sheets 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.

2.1.6 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Flyer to all families
- Poster for school events where families attend
- List of individuals, community groups, or agencies to invite to the orientation
- Kickoff event or other plan to communicate with invited stakeholders
- List of ways that family and community members can engage with the school
- Social media presence about the orientation activities and the school climate improvements

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

to communicate the importance of school climate to stakeholders, and the importance of quality school climate surveys.

- [*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 & 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).

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

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)

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.

2.1.7 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List of events, coinciding with various stages of the initiative, where you will share survey findings and incident data, solicit input, review and select interventions, and develop implementation plans
- Guidance documents for each subset of stakeholders (staff, students, families, and community members) to help them understand and engage in evidence-based approaches to school climate improvement

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.

- [Effective Planning Strategies for Program Implementation](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses the components of effective program implementation. Specifically, it discusses what data, policies, and systems you need for successful implementation and sustainability and how to adjust current, or develop new, policies and systems to support the effort.
- [Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar discusses how to use data to identify school needs and select which programmatic interventions can address those needs and be implemented with fidelity.
- [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.
- [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.
- [Community and Family Engagement: Principals Share What Works](#) (Coalition for Community Schools)
 - This Coalition for Community Schools (supported by National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals) document provides keys to community engagement and engaging stakeholders.
- [Handbook on Family and Community Engagement](#) (Academic Development Institute Center on Innovation & Improvement)
 - This handbook discusses family and community engagement and how it supports student success, using data to support engagement, social and emotional learning, creating a community school, engaging families in learning, cultural and linguistic competence in working with families, creating a school/family/community partnership, family and community engagement in different types of schools (e.g., high school, charter, rural), and suggested practice.
- [Family and Community Engagement](#) (U.S. Department of Education)
 - This U.S. Department of Education website provides multiple resources; toolkits; programs; and guidance for schools, parents and families, and communities.

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



- 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)

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.

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

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.

- [*Handbook on Family and Community Engagement*](#) (Academic Development Institute and the Center on Innovation & Improvement)
 - This handbook discusses family and community engagement and how it supports student success, using data to support engagement, social and emotional learning, creating a community school, engaging families in learning, cultural and linguistic competence in working with families, creating a school/family/community partnership, family and community engagement in different types of schools (e.g., high school, charter, rural), and suggested practice.
- [*Family and Community Engagement Website*](#) (U.S. Department of Education)
 - This U.S. Department of Education website provides multiple resources; toolkits; programs; and guidance for schools, parents and families, and communities.
- [*Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education*](#) (National Education Association)
 - This National Education Association document discusses an updated, more inclusive model of parental engagement, school-family-community partnerships, to include parents, extended family members, and caregivers working in collaboration with business leaders and community groups in goal-oriented activities linked to improved student achievement and school success. It presents specific strategies to engage families and communities in education and examples of successful parent-family-community partnerships.
- [*Fostering School, Family, and Community Involvement*](#) (The Hamilton Fish Institute on School and Community Violence & Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory)
 - This resource, developed in partnership with the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, identifies several components that, when effectively addressed, provide schools with the foundation and building blocks needed to create and maintain safe schools.
- [*Closing the Gap: Cultural Perspectives on Family-Driven Care*](#) (National Federation of Families for Children’s Mental Health)
 - This paper describes “family-driven-care” from four cultural perspectives: Asian, Black, First Nations, and Latino families living in the United States. Different perspectives highlight the role and importance of incorporating “family culture” as defined by the family in the process of outreaching, engaging, and involving families in care.

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

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)



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.

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)



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.

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)

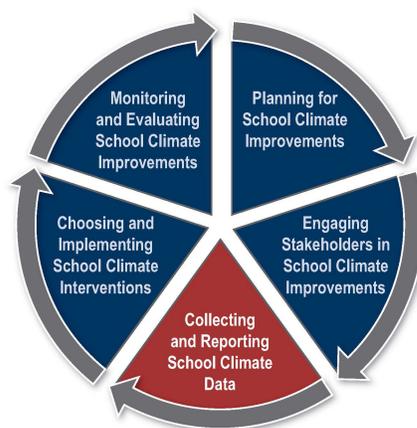
Monitoring and
Evaluating Overall
School Climate
Improvements
(ACTIVITY SET 5)

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

Note: This version of Activity Set 3 is intended for sites that are using the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS). If you are using a school climate survey other than the EDSCLS, please click [here](#) to go to a special version of Activity Set 3 for users of other surveys. It contains more detailed information on collecting and reporting data that is not covered here because much of that work is already done by the EDSCLS platform.

Activity Sets 1 and 2 provide goals and strategies that helped you decide the types of school climate data to collect, develop your data collection infrastructure, and engage stakeholders about school climate improvements, among a host of other activities. In this set of activities, you will leverage the planning and engagement work in Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data.

Collecting and reporting on your school climate data for the first time can provide a baseline—or initial assessment—for climate-related characteristics in your state, district, charter authorizer, CMO/EMO, or school. This baseline can help you identify how to effectively improve the climate in your school(s). By subsequently collecting these data multiple times throughout your efforts, you can assess your progress in implementing school climate efforts and the expected outcomes.



This activity set is composed of four action steps: (1) collect data, (2) analyze data, (3) disseminate findings, and (4) evaluate and refine data collection and reporting protocols and continue planning for improvement and sustainability. The main objectives of this set of activities are to assess the current state of your school climate and provide opportunities for your stakeholders to understand the data collected. We focus on the EDSCLS data (as reported by students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, or families¹⁷) as the primary data source, but other data sources are discussed as well (see *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data*). Multiple pieces of data help you assess and report on your school climate (e.g., focus groups and interviews plus school administrative data such as attendance, behavior incidents, suspensions and expulsions, and student achievement) and the development of student social and emotional learning skills. The result also can inform other efforts that relate to school climate, such as bullying prevention and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Each of the following objectives will be discussed in Activity Set 3A for EDSCLS users:

¹⁷ Here and throughout, we use the term *families* to refer to parents and guardians.

- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

ACTION STEP 1. Collect Data

- OBJECTIVE 3.1.1A: Develop an administration protocol for data collection
- OBJECTIVE 3.1.2A: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders
- OBJECTIVE 3.1.3A: Administer surveys to target population(s) each school year
- OBJECTIVE 3.1.4A: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument(s) as necessary
- OBJECTIVE 3.1.5A: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate
- OBJECTIVE 3.1.6A: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

ACTION STEP 2. Analyze Data

- OBJECTIVE 3.2.1A: Ensure high-quality survey data
- OBJECTIVE 3.2.2A: Analyze scales (topic areas) available in your survey data
- OBJECTIVE 3.2.3A: Analyze data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)
- OBJECTIVE 3.2.4A: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest
- OBJECTIVE 3.2.5A: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

ACTION STEP 3. Disseminate Findings

- OBJECTIVE 3.3.1A: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings
- OBJECTIVE 3.3.2A: Generate an index score for each school (optional)
- OBJECTIVE 3.3.3A: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format

ACTION STEP 4. Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability

- OBJECTIVE 3.4.1A: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set

**Collect Data
(ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 1 [3.1A])**

The first action step within this activity set, collecting data, provides objectives and strategies that, when realized, will support subsequent action steps within this activity set. The data collected influence the types of analyses you can conduct and the reports you can disseminate to stakeholders. The objectives and strategies provide information on the data collection process for school climate surveys, as well as other data sources (e.g., focus groups or student social and emotional skills measures). If you

Because you have chosen the EDSCS, you will have the ability to compare results against national benchmarks, beginning in fall 2017.

The data collected influence the types of analyses you can conduct and the reports you can disseminate to stakeholders. The objectives and strategies provide information on the data collection process for school climate surveys, as well as other data sources (e.g., focus groups or student social and emotional skills measures). If you

decided to collect and analyze climate survey data and also use other data sources (see *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data*), you may be able to compare results across multiple data sources. This approach may provide a more accurate and complete picture of your school climate. In addition, multiple data sources allow you to gather unique information that might not be revealed if you use only one data source. For example, school climate survey data provide perceptions of the outcomes of the school climate process, whereas focus group and interview data can help you understand the strategies and practices that are being used to promote a positive school climate.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.1A: Develop an administration protocol for data collection

Purpose of developing an administration protocol for data collection

Before you collect your school climate data, revisit the administration plan developed through *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data*. This step will help you develop your administration protocol or the directions and expectations you provide to those who are administering the survey. Administration instructions and protocols provide directions to those administering surveys by standardizing the administration procedure, thus promoting systematic data collection. For example, determine the time frame that respondents will have to complete the survey (i.e., the survey administration window). However, as an EDSCLS site, administration protocols are provided to you as part of the EDSCLS package of materials. Specifically, EDSCLS provides you with a [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \(EDSCLS\)](#) that contains instructions for information technology (IT) staff to download the platform to the host server, an administration guide, instructions for administration of the school-based student survey, frequently asked questions and answers, example communication language and a promotional flyer that you can use, a confidentiality pledge for survey proctors, an example proctor script for in-school student surveys, and consent forms for multiple types of parental consent.

If you plan to collect more in-depth information through focus groups or interviews, protocols should be developed for these data collection efforts. These protocols should be as detailed as possible and should promote consistency across interviewers.

Strategies for developing an administration protocol for data collection

- a. Finalize the measures you will use to collect school climate data—for example, surveys, focus groups, and administration data—prior to developing your administration protocol. Based on planning and state or district priorities, review your school climate survey instrument (and any other additional data sources you plan to collect) to ensure that items that align with your vision and logic model are included.

3.1.1A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Administration protocol for school climate surveys
- Professional development on EDSCLS administration instructions
- Administration protocol for school climate interviews and focus groups

Consider whether additional items are needed. For example, for the EDSCLS platform, additional items can be added to the data collection platform if needed.¹⁸

- b. Read the EDSCLS administration materials thoroughly and be sure to disseminate them to the appropriate school-level staff.
- c. Implement professional development sessions on the EDSCLS administration protocol to disseminate and clarify instructions.
- d. Be sure your IT staff download and read the IT instructions from the platform as soon as possible but at least one week before the administration window opens.
- e. Decide whether all stakeholders are eligible for the survey or if exceptions will be made (e.g., For the student survey, will you be able to administer the survey to students with severe cognitive disabilities who are eligible for alternative assessments?).
- f. Determine whether you want to administer the survey to the entire population or to a representative sample of the population. If you opt to survey only a sample of the population, you will need a sampling plan. We recommend working with a sampling statistician if you do not have sampling expertise in-house.
- g. Determine an appropriate time frame for survey administration. If administering an online survey, plan for a two- to three-week survey administration window.
- h. Allow respondents an adequate amount of time to experience the building-level conditions prior to providing their feedback through taking the survey.
- i. Administer the annual school climate survey in the spring (ideal time).
- j. Ensure that appropriate training is provided as needed to school-level staff and that they know how to access the survey, log students in to the survey, handle students' questions, and maintain confidentiality.
- k. Determine whether teachers will administer surveys to their own students and how you will provide accommodations for students with disabilities.
- l. Implement plans designed earlier in the school climate improvement process to meet minimum response rate targets for all respondent groups. (See *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data.*)
- m. Determine whether you want to use the EDSCLS option to link student survey data to administrative records by keeping track of the assignment of student login credentials. If you opt to do this, determine how you want to keep track of these access code assignments and determine which administrative data you want to link to your survey data (e.g., free or reduced-price lunch status, disability status, English learner status, or incident

¹⁸ Schools and districts also are required to report information about school climate pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Information collected on school climate may help schools and districts prepare their responses to the CRDC survey. More information about the CRDC can be found at crdc.ed.gov.

and achievement data). Note that you will need to use the appropriate assent language to exercise this option. (See examples in the [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \[EDSCLS\]](#).)

Related resources for developing an administration protocol for data collection

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments [NCSSLE])
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.
- [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys](#) (EDSCLS)
 - This user's manual provides guidance to education agencies in how to download and use the EDSCLS Web platform to administer the surveys and collect data.
- [Project Prevent Webinar: What You Need to Know: Participation in the School Climate Survey](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents information about EDSCLS, including what it measures, how to access and administer the survey, and how to use the results. Even if you do not choose to use this survey, it provides helpful guidelines when choosing and administering the survey(s) or items you would like to use.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Understanding Student Discipline Practices in Charter Schools: A Research Agenda](#) (Center for Reinventing Public Education)
 - This report describes the kinds of methods and data that will allow for useful sector comparisons, as well as other things you can learn from and about charter schools on the topic of discipline in schools.
- [Using Data to Create Positive School Climates and Discipline Practices in Charter Schools—National Research and Examples from the Field](#) (National Charter School Resource Center [NCSRC])
 - This webinar shares effective, evidence-based practices and school-based examples of how to create positive school climates, including describing a tool that charter schools can use to monitor the impacts of disciplinary actions.

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)

OBJECTIVE 3.1.2A: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders

Purpose of communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

Although the majority of Action Step 2: Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements involves disseminating knowledge about your school climate improvements, it is important to target communication on the purpose and procedures of data collection. These communication strategies should start as soon as you have confirmed the types of data you will be collecting and when you will collect the data. Increase the frequency in which you communicate to stakeholders a few weeks prior to the opening of the data collection window and continue during the data collection period to remind respondents to complete the survey. Be sure your communication materials inform stakeholders why the survey is important and why their participation is needed and valued. By being strategic about your messaging prior to and during data collection, you are more likely to obtain buy-in from stakeholders, as well as achieve a higher response rate from survey respondents. Remember to provide translated communication materials for those members of your school community (e.g., students, families, and noninstructional staff) who are English learners or do not speak or read English, so that they also are informed. Example communication materials are provided as part of the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)*.

Strategies for communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

- a. Disseminate information to students through school or classroom announcements, newsletters, and flyers prior to the survey administration.
- b. Have students introduce the importance of the surveys to their families to increase buy-in and participation.
- c. Disseminate a targeted advanced mailing with information on the survey to families.
- d. Disseminate advanced reminders prior to survey administration to instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families through online platforms (e.g., school or district/CMO/EMO website, social media, electronic mailing lists, and direct e-mails) and school newsletters.
- e. Disseminate information to parents through other forms of family engagement strategies (e.g., open houses, parent-teacher organization/association meetings, back-to-school nights, report card pickup).
- f. Provide reminders to complete surveys within the given time frame to instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families through as many communication vehicles as possible (e.g., e-mail, announcements, or posters).

3.1.2A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Communication materials (e.g., flyers, newsletters, or online postings), which can be adapted from the EDSCLS materials provided in the platform
- Reminder communication materials to instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families

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)

- 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)

Related resources for communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- [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.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

Objective 3.1.3A: Administer surveys to target population(s) each school year

Purpose of administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

After you have developed and disseminated your administrative instructions and protocols and informed stakeholders of the upcoming data collection, now is the time to administer your survey(s) to your target population(s). Survey data provide you with important information about your school climate. Survey results help you identify your current climate needs, which you can use to inform selection and implementation of interventions. (Interventions [e.g., evidence-based programs [EBPs] and practices; those showing evidence of promise; strategies, effective practices, and approaches] are discussed further in Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.)

You may want to administer the survey(s) multiple times during the year (no more than three) to use data for continuous improvement. Administer surveys during the same month(s) each year (e.g., in April of each school year) so that you have consistent data across time. This approach will

help you determine if climate-related interventions are working, for whom, if you need to modify current interventions, or if you need to select new interventions. If you want to identify where and for whom the intervention is working, it will be useful to disaggregate the data collected.



Districts/CMOs/EMOs hosting EDSCLS across schools can use the survey results to compare schools and differentiate support.

Strategies for administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

- a. Survey all students in Grades 5–12, if possible. If you choose to select a representative sample of your target population to be surveyed, it is recommended that you contact a sampling statistician to help develop a sampling plan. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)
- b. Use the administration protocol provided in the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)* to guide survey administration.
- c. Consider surveying all school staff (not just teachers), including teacher aides, paraprofessionals, and noninstructional staff. Use the administration protocol provided in the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)* to guide your survey administration of the two surveys designed for teachers other school staff.
- d. Survey parents/guardians using the survey designed for families and the administration protocol provided in the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)* to guide your survey administration.

3.1.3A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Survey plan for full population (“universe”) or representative sample of target population(s)
- Sampling plan if using a sample of respondents (developed by sampling statistician, if there is no in-house expertise)

Related resources for administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

- [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \(EDSCLS\)](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This user’s manual provides guidance to education agencies in how to download and use the EDSCLS Web platform to administer the surveys and collect data.
- [American Association for Public Opinion Research](#)
 - This website includes resources with effective practices, including webinars and guides, focused on advancing the science and practice of survey and opinion research to give people a voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.

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)



- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).

OBJECTIVE 3.1.4A: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument(s) as necessary

Purpose of confirming the reliability of scales and revising instrument(s) as necessary

The domain and topic area scales in the EDSCLS have already been vetted as reliable and valid. *Reliability* refers to the degree to which participants consistently respond to items within a scale, whereas *validity* refers to the degree to which the survey item measures what it is intended to measure. If you administered a survey that you developed (or modified) yourself, it is important to perform psychometric analyses to ensure that your instrument is reliable and valid. However, this part is not necessary for the EDSCLS because these psychometric analyses have been performed for you. As such, no strategies are suggested for this particular goal when using the EDSCLS.

Related resources for confirming the reliability of scales and revising instrument(s) as necessary

If you are interested in more information on reliability of scales, please see the following:

- [Evaluating the Reliability of Surveys and Assessments](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents ways to determine whether the survey items actually measure the underlying concepts they are intended to measure. Topics include the purpose and characteristics of reliability and its analysis, as well as common methods of reliability analysis for various types of data.
- [Survey Development](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on the development of school climate surveys/measures. The content includes extant measures/surveys, vetted measures versus pretesting new items, individual items versus scales, and creating and using table shells upfront for later data population.
- [Strengthening Assessments of School Climate](#) (The Research Alliance for New York City Schools)
 - This resource summarizes findings from the New York City School Survey, including lessons learned and recommended steps for collaborating with state departments of education.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.5A: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate

Purpose of collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

Although surveys provide broad, quantifiable, and confidential information about how people perceive and experience school climate, other data can help you build an even more complete

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)



picture of your district or school environment. To fully assess your district's, CMO/EMO's or school's climate, it is useful to supplement your survey data with data from other sources, such as administrative data (e.g., incidents, attendance, academic outcomes and discipline). (See *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data* for further explanation of these data sources.) It is likely that some or all of these administrative data are already being collected in your district, CMO/EMO, or school. For example, you could compare student perceptions of safety in the survey data with the rate of violent incidents or student reports of staying home because of feeling unsafe at school with attendance data.

When there is agreement among data sources, the conclusions you can draw are stronger. If there is little or no agreement among data sources, there could be multiple reasons why a disconnect occurs—whether it be inconsistent data collection procedures or inaccurate instruments. For example, teachers within schools do not always complete behavioral incident reports consistently. If data do not correlate with each other, do not force an explanation but instead determine why inconsistencies exist and help stakeholders understand how and where perceptions vary.

Strategies for collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

- a. Ensure there is consistency among teachers when completing disciplinary referrals reports.
- b. Obtain the current school year's administrative data so they correspond to the timing of survey data.
- c. Include data on positive student behavior (e.g., student social and emotional skills, awards, volunteering efforts and prosocial behaviors).
- d. Cross-tabulate school-level school climate survey data, school-level incident or disciplinary data, and school-level academic performance measures to identify the relationships between and among different variables.
- e. If you plan to link student-level survey data to administrative data, you can analyze the relationship among school climate perceptions, incident or disciplinary data, and achievement to better understand the relationship between and among how students perceive their school and their achievement, prosocial behaviors, and risky behaviors.
 - Be sure you have the data infrastructure to both de-identify and still connect multiple data sources at the student level. (See *Objective 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure [e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems].*)
 - Determine how you will keep track of the assignment of student login credentials. Note that you will need to use the appropriate consent language to link student data to administrative records. (See the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys [EDSCLS].*)

3.1.5A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Administrative data reports for each school
- An aggregated report summarizing conditions across schools using administrative data and other student outcome data
- Data systems that connect various pieces of data collected
- Reports that summarize the analysis of the multiple pieces of data collected

- f.  Support consistency of incident and other data collected among schools through backup materials and training. Backup materials can include definitions, rubrics, and anchoring items. Training can include coaching and supervision.

Related resources for collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 3: Putting Your Data in Context](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice putting your school climate data in context.
- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.
- [Data Interpretation Guide](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This guide provides descriptions of, and recommendations for, using and interpreting various school climate survey data.
- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- [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 setting up processes for data collection.
- [Understanding Student Discipline Practices in Charter Schools: A Research Agenda](#) (Center for Reinventing Public Education)
 - This report describes the kinds of methods and data that will allow for useful sector comparisons, as well as other things you can learn from and about charter schools on the topic of discipline in schools.
- [Using Data to Create Positive School Climates and Discipline Practices in Charter Schools—National Research and Examples From the Field](#) (NCSRC)
 - This webinar shares effective, evidence-based practices and school-based examples of how to create positive school climates, including describing a tool that charter schools can use to monitor the impacts of disciplinary actions.

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[Cost of Incidents: Administrative and Instruction Costs to Conduct Office Discipline Referrals](#)
 - This tool allows spreadsheet comparison of current costs of incidents with the costs and benefits after implementation of programs and strategies.

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)



- Maryland—[Report Card Grades Earned and Risk Behaviors Graph](#) (S3)
 - This resource demonstrates how to graphically compare school and district grade and incident data with state data.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.6A: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

Purpose of conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

Survey data and administrative data provide quantitative information that help you understand your current school climate and assess your ongoing efforts. Focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families, conversely, provide context for survey data and allow you to investigate perceptions of school climate and the outcomes of your school climate efforts more closely. Focus group and interviews can provide information about how the school climate improvements that you put in place are working. Focus groups should be designed intentionally to obtain a deeper understanding from the people that you need to hear from.

Analyzing your survey data (see Activity Set 3, Action Step 2: Analyze Data) reports the breadth of school climate, allowing you to target the areas for more in-depth information from focus groups or interviews. For example, if your school’s scores on a particular scale or topic area are lower than you would like, focus groups can help you investigate why. Similarly, if a handful of schools in your district are making large gains in a particular topic area, interviewing the leadership in those schools can help you determine how they are achieving that success. Focus group and interview data can provide rich information about school climate, providing stakeholders with an opportunity to voice their concerns as well as discuss areas that they want to keep improving and growing as a school community, ensuring that a representative sample of stakeholders is able to participate in the focus groups (e.g., randomly select those who will participate). As such, focus groups and interviews, typically conducted after you have analyzed your survey results, are conducted and analyzed through a systematic approach to obtain a deeper look into the survey results.

Districts, CMOs/EMOs, and schools need to consider who will participate in the focus groups and interviews, ensuring that participants represent as many subgroups (e.g., race/ethnicity; English learners; and students who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) of the population as possible. In addition, you should take the time to consider the type of information that you want to gather from stakeholders during this process because it may supplement other data collection efforts. If you do not have the capacity to collect and analyze focus group and interview data, consider partnering with an outside organization that has experience with this type of data collection. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)



Districts and CMOs/EMOs should consider whether they want to conduct focus groups and interviews across the district/CMO/EMO or at the school level.

Strategies for conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

- a. Review resources on how to intentionally design focus group protocols.

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)

- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

- b. Develop focus group or interview protocols that focus on the information you most want to gather.
- c. Select an appropriate sample of participants who vary across key respondent characteristics to engage in the focus group and interview process.
- d. Create translated materials for those who are non-English speakers, if applicable.
- e. Determine how to analyze your focus group and interview findings.
- f. Create a zone of safety to maximize participants' willingness to respond candidly and honestly.
- g. Use a focus group facilitator who does not have the ability to punish or reward people for their responses.
- h. Have the note taker include descriptions of affect (e.g., enthusiasm, anger, or frustration).
- i.  Record focus groups if participants feel comfortable with your doing so. Determine if you want to collect focus group or interview data at the district/CMO/EMO or school level.

3.1.6A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List of students, staff, or families to participate in focus groups and interviews
- Focus group and interview protocols
- Transcribed or detailed notes of focus group and interview content
- Reports that summarize the focus group and interview findings
- Processes that help triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data (i.e., compare-and-contrast survey and administrative data with focus group and interview findings)

Related resources for conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

- [Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait](#) (National Institute for Urban School Improvement)
 - This guide highlights how a focus group can be used to provide continuous outcome feedback. Covered in this resource is how a focus group is defined, created, and used as an evaluation tool.
- [Promoting Student Voice Through Student Focus Groups](#) (Institute for Character Education)
 - This document provides guidelines for conducting fishbowl focus groups with students.
- [Using Focus Groups to Get Student Feedback](#) (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University)
 - This guide provides direction for collecting data with focus groups that can be adapted for precollege students.

Related resources from the field

- Colorado—[Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Districts and Schools](#)
 - This toolkit from the Colorado Education Initiative provides tips for creating and using a focus group on page 14.

- Iowa—[Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate](#), Step 3:

Describing the “Story” Behind Our Data

- These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

Analyze Data (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 2 [3.2A])

After you collect your school climate data (surveys, administrative data, behavioral incident data, and focus groups and interviews), you will analyze them. As an EDSCLS site, your survey data are analyzed for you as part of the Web-based platform. You can retrieve results through the results section of the administrator dashboard. (See the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys [EDSCLS]*.) Many of the objectives within Action Step 1, Collect Data, reference data analysis, but this section discusses data analysis topics in more detail: (1) ensuring high-quality data; (2) analyzing data by each domain and topic area of [Safe Supportive Schools/EDSCLS Model](#); (3) analyzing data for the entire population and by respondent characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and English learners); (4) disaggregating data by respondent group (students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and family); and (5) comparing data to other schools in the district, CMO/EMO, charter authorization zone, state, or nation.

OBJECTIVE 3.2.1A: Ensure high-quality survey data

Purpose of ensuring high-quality survey data

High-quality data are the foundation of good data analysis and allow you to be confident in your results. Thus, high response rates and efficient data management (i.e., understanding the quality and content of the data) is crucial to data analysis. Data management involves, for example, cleaning, editing, examining data anomalies, and checking for out-of-range responses. The EDSCLS platform was designed to do all of these data management activities for you and produce high-quality data. Your aim during this objective is to ensure that you have a high unit-level response rate (i.e., the percentage of eligible respondents who complete the survey). If response rates are lower than anticipated, make plans to increase them in your next administration.

Strategies for ensuring high-quality survey data

- a. Look at your item distributions to make sure they are variable (i.e., if almost everyone in your population answers “yes” or “strongly agree” to a survey item, the lack of variability in the responses indicates that the item may not be useful).

3.2.1A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Respondent eligibility criteria
- EDSCLS platform output that reports unit response rates as well as item response option distributions

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)



- b. Assess your unit-level response rate (i.e., the percentage of eligible respondents who complete the survey) and develop a plan to improve it, if the response rate is lower than desired.

Related resources for ensuring high-quality survey data

- [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \(EDSCLS\)](#)
 - This user’s manual provides guidance to education agencies regarding how to download and use the EDSCLS Web platform to administer the surveys and collect data.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).
- [Best Practices in Research](#) (American Association for Public Opinion Research)
 - This tool lists effective practices for ensuring survey and survey data quality.

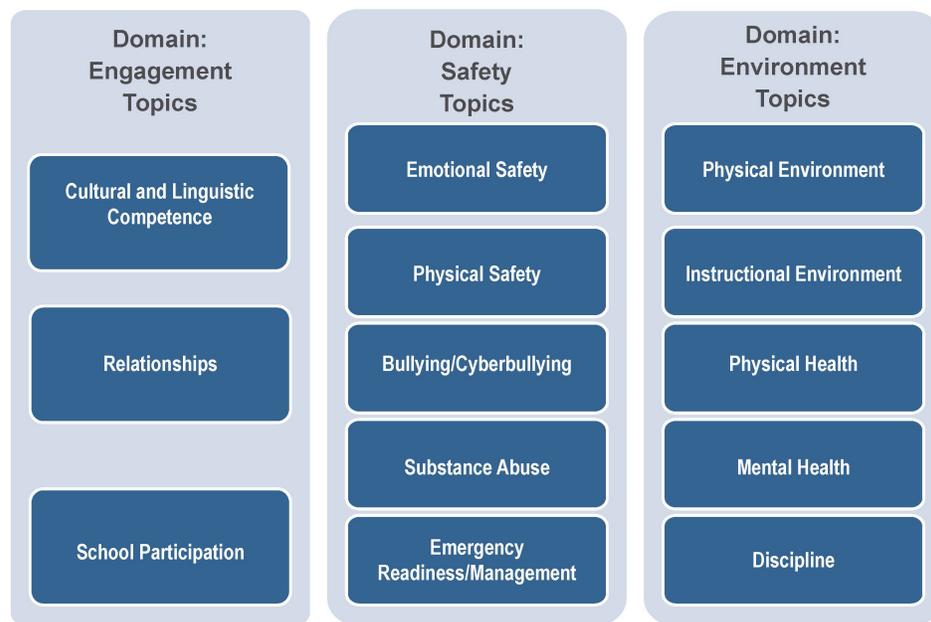
OBJECTIVE 3.2.2A: Analyze scales (topic areas) available in your survey data

Purpose of analyzing topic areas available in your survey

After each data collection, the EDSCLS platform provides you with scale scores for each domain and topic area (as shown in Figure 3) for each applicable respondent group (i.e., students, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff).¹⁹ In addition, the EDSCLS platform provides you with item-level results for each item on the survey and each respondent group. You can use these findings to determine which areas of climate are perceived the most positively and negatively in your district or school. When you know your strengths and your areas in need of improvement, you will be able to make an informed and data-driven choice of interventions. In addition, these analyses will inform the development of your school climate goals and monitor progress toward those goals. The Safe Supportive Schools/EDSCLS model of school climate is presented in Figure 3, for reference.

¹⁹ Note that the EDSCLS does not produce scale scores at the domain or topic area level for parents.

Figure 3. Domains and Topic Areas of EDSCLS



Strategies for analyzing topic areas available in your survey

- Use your scale scores to prioritize the school climate topic areas that you want to focus on. (See the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) for more information on using scale scores overall and by respondent characteristics.)
- Use the item-level results to focus on the school climate topic areas that may be more immediately actionable for schools. (See the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) for more information on using item-level data.)
- Compare scale scores and item-level results from previous data collection efforts to long-term determine growth.
- Use additional resources to help analyze and interpret the data. For example, use the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) and [Topical Discussion Guides](#) in the [Resource Package](#) to help you interpret and use your data to improve specific school climate topic areas overall and help you implement a multi-tiered system of supports.

Related resources for analyzing topic areas available in your survey

- [Data Interpretation Guide](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This guide provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various school climate survey data.
- [EDSCLS Data Analysis Worksheet](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This worksheet provides key questions that EDSCLS users can use to guide analysis of their data.

- [Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides](#) (NCSSLE)
 - These guides provide information to assist with using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas overall and by a multi-tiered system of supports as applicable.
- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement), data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).
- [American Association for Public Opinion Research Website](#) (AAPOR)
 - This website includes resources with effective practices, including webinars and guides, focused on advancing the science and practice of survey and opinion research to give people a voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

OBJECTIVE 3.2.3A: Analyze data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

Purpose of analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

If you decided to survey more than one respondent group (students, instructional and noninstructional staff, or families), comparing their perceptions can be valuable both because members of each group are able to see different things and may respond differently to the same factors. For example, if students, staff, and families generally report similar perceptions about a school climate topic area, this alignment suggests consistency in how the groups perceive the climate. However, if you identify discrepancies among respondent groups, you may want to collect deeper qualitative information to understand the differences between stakeholders. (See *Objective 3.1.6a: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families.*) Identifying differences between stakeholders allows you to target interventions specific to each group, ensuring that everyone has the supports to experience a positive school climate.



- 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)

Strategies for analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

- a. Compare mean topic area values and item-level results on each topic area across students, staff, and parents.²⁰
- b. If possible, rank or graph data to provide easy visual for identifying need and gaps.

3.2.3A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Report that provides mean topic area values and item-level results by respondent group
- Report that provides results from each respondent group by year to determine change across time

Related resources for analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

- [EDSCLS Data Analysis Worksheet](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This worksheet provides key questions that EDSCLS users can use to guide analysis of their data.
- [Data Interpretation Guide](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This guide provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various school climate survey data.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

OBJECTIVE 3.2.4A: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest

Purpose of examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

Although it is important to understand your students', staffs', and families' perceptions of a school's climate, it also is important to analyze data by respondent characteristics to determine if there are different perceptions of school climate within a respondent group. Respondent characteristics can include demographic characteristics of students, staff, or families (e.g., race/ethnicity or gender), and other characteristics, such as students' grade level, free or reduced-price lunch status, and English learner status plus teachers' years of experience. Analyzing data by respondent characteristics helps you identify the needs, challenges, and successes that are specific to groups of respondents. This approach also will help inform the selection of interventions, determine if you

²⁰ You will be able to use results of a benchmarking study to help facilitate the meaning of scale scores when EDSCLS benchmark data are released in fall 2017.

need to target or differentiate supports to different groups, and provide insight into what you are doing well. Although the EDSCSL platform produces data by basic respondent characteristics (see [Data Interpretation Guide](#)), you also can link your student data set to school administrative records, which can be disaggregated, sometimes using additional student characteristics (e.g., grade point average). (See *Objective 3.1.1A: Develop an administration protocol for data collection.*)

Strategies for examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

- a. It is possible to link student EDSCSL data to existing administrative records by keeping track of the access codes (logon IDs) that students are assigned. (See the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys [EDSCSL]* for more information.) If you plan to do this:

- Determine which respondent characteristics you want to (or are able to) analyze.

The EDSCSL platform will suppress findings from any respondent group with fewer than 10 people (e.g., if there is only one respondent of a certain race/ethnicity) to prevent indirect disclosure of a respondent's identity. (See the [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \[EDSCSL\]](#) for more information.)

- Ensure that you have the appropriate demographic data from administrative records matched with the survey data. (See *Objective 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure [e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems].*)
- b. Analyze domains or topic areas of school climate by the respondent characteristics of interest. If there are subgroups of interest that are too small to report, consider collecting in-depth information from these groups through one-on-one interviews or focus groups.
 - c. If possible, rank or graph data to provide easy visuals for identifying needs and gaps.
 - d.  Analyze data by respondent group at different levels of aggregation (e.g., school, district, or state), if possible.

3.2.4A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Report that provides results from analysis by respondent characteristics
- Report that provides results by respondent characteristics by year to determine change

Related resources for examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

- [Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys \(EDSCSL\)](#)
 - This user's manual provides guidance to education agencies in how to download and use the EDSCSL Web platform to administer the surveys and collect data.
- [EDSCSL Data Analysis Worksheet](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This worksheet provides key questions that EDSCSL users can use to guide analysis of their data.
- [Data Interpretation Guide](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This guide provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various school climate survey data.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

OBJECTIVE 3.2.5A: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

Purpose of comparing data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

Without a comparison point, it may be difficult to interpret school climate scores.

If state data are available, districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools can compare their school climate results against those data. Likewise, data can be compared across districts or CMOs/EMOs and schools, if available. In addition, benchmarking data for EDSCS topic areas and domains will be available beginning in fall 2017, which also will help facilitate understanding the meaning of scale scores.



Districts/CMOs/EMOs that are helping support school climate improvements can help schools understand their data by allowing their schools to see each other's scores so they can make school-to-school comparisons.

Strategies for comparing data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

- a. Determine what data are available for comparison purposes for each respondent group.
- b. Compare your school-level data (e.g., scale scores) against available district/CMO/EMO, state, or national data.
- c. Compare your school-level data (e.g., scale scores) to data from other schools of similar size, urbanicity, and demographic makeup, if information is available.
- d.  Compare district/CMO/EMO-level data (e.g., scale scores) against available state or national data.
- e.  Districts/CMOs/EMOs can allow their schools to see each other's scores so that they can make school-to-school comparisons.

3.2.5A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- A district benchmark (score) for schools to use as a comparison point for each topic area
- Reports that compare school data to district, state, or national benchmarks

Related resources for comparing data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.
- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 5: Sharing School Climate Data With Stakeholders](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice sharing your school climate data.

Related resources from the field

- Wisconsin—[Statement of Need Data Worksheet](#)
 - This worksheet helps you compare data to other data sets, specifically the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Disseminate Findings (Activity Set 3, Action Step 3 [3.3a])

Following your data analysis and report development, it is an effective practice to disseminate the findings to your stakeholders. This process involves developing user-friendly reports that stakeholders can use to review the findings from the school climate data collection and analysis. These reports allow members of the school community to make informed choices when selecting interventions and improving the school climate efforts. Because you may be delivering the reports to multiple stakeholders, the language you use should be easily understood by all groups and address the interests of each group. In addition, you may want to target reports for those groups that are not accustomed to reading and comprehending reports about data findings, compared with more technical reports for those stakeholders who are more data savvy.

This action step provides three objectives that help you disseminate your data, one of which is optional. These objectives include *Objective 3.3.1A: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings*; *Objective 3.3.2A: Generate an index score for each school (optional)*; and *Objective 3.3.3A: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format*.

OBJECTIVE 3.3.1A: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

Purpose of involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

Members of the school community and other stakeholders can play a key role in helping you review summary findings and determine key priorities from the school climate data. This is particularly true for charter school governing boards that are responsible for approving annual school budget

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)



allocations in a data-driven manner. Involving them in the review process leverages support across audiences, facilitates their understanding of the data, and helps you determine how to share the information. When stakeholders have the opportunity to dig into the data, they are more likely to understand how the data fit into their work and trust the results from the data. In addition, if stakeholders know that the choice of interventions will be based at least in part on their review of the data, it will enhance their buy-in to the interventions and their implementation. (See Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.) Stakeholders also can aid in disseminating the findings to other entities, such as the public, other education agencies, and specific members of stakeholder groups.

Strategies for involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

- a. Plan meetings that balance enough structure for stakeholders to review results but enough flexibility to consider stakeholder input.
- b. Allow sufficient time and supports for participants to review the materials before decisions are made.
- c. Allow sufficient time for participants to understand the relationship between multiple data sources.
- d. Set goals for improving data points; use specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART) goals (see the Resources section).
- e. Present data to stakeholders using graphs or other visual products. Consider the needs of different audiences when preparing a dissemination plan.
- f. Allow members of your school community to review the data reports and determine key takeaways from the data (e.g., what the school is doing well and what the school needs to do to improve).
- g. Provide opportunities for participants to help determine priorities.

3.3.1A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Dissemination plan with stakeholder input
- Face-to-face meetings or interactive webinar with family, school, district, CMO/EMO leaders, charter authorizers, governing boards, or community stakeholders

Related resources for involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 5: Sharing School Climate Data With Stakeholders](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice sharing your school climate data.
- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.

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)

- [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 demonstrates 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.
- *Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound (SMART) Objectives* ([webpage](#)) ([document](#)) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
 - These sources provide a framework for strategizing next steps for programs after looking at data from school climate survey(s).
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).
- [Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education](#) (Institute of Education Sciences)
 - This guide provides a framework, tools, and vocabulary needed to support data-informed conversations and action in education. It walks users through five key steps in using data for decision making and strategic action: setting the stage, examining the data, understanding the findings, developing an action plan, and monitoring progress and measuring success.

Related resources from the field

- Iowa—[Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate](#), Step 4: Detailing Our Actions
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

OBJECTIVE 3.3.2A: Generate an index score for each school (optional)

Purpose of generating an index score for each school

If you are hosting the EDSCLS, you can choose to export the raw data set from the platform (see the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys [EDSCLS]*) and



use it, along with other school climate indicators, to generate school-level climate ratings for each participating school, often called a “school climate index” score. Creating a school climate index score may allow for directly comparable and actionable metrics that cut across schools, enabling you to monitor and track changes in school climate at the building level. In addition, it can serve as an aid to school staff and families as they see change in their school’s score across time. The development of a school climate index will vary depending on the number and type of data sources that you want to include in the metric and how you want to integrate them within the index score. (See *Objective 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data* to help you generate your school climate ratings.)

Strategies for generating an index score for each school

- Ensure that measures included in the index are stable and consistent, are able to move with real-world change, and can detect sufficient differences among schools.
- Develop a scoring system prior to data collection and analysis and incorporate scales from student surveys, adult surveys, and other incident and administrative data, as desired.
- Include both risk and protective factors in your school climate rating.
- Develop a formula for a school climate index score and apply it consistently to data from each participating school.

3.3.2A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Metric for generating school climate index scores
- Formula for index applied consistently to data from each school
- School climate ratings for each participating school

Related resources for generating an index score for each school

- [School Safety Score Considerations: Construction, Quality, Utility](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This presentation demonstrates the purpose of school safety scores, the importance and implications of policy and data context for score development, methods for determining score content domains and items, how to establish data quality and score formula, and how to present the scores.

Related resources from the field

- Arizona—[Climate Index](#)
 - This webpage includes a description of the climate index, the formula to calculate the index, and how to appropriately interpret the index scores.
- California—[School Climate Report Card](#)
 - This webpage includes a description of the School Climate Index (SCI) and a link to information on the methodology to calculate the SCI.
- Georgia—[College and Career Ready Performance Index](#)
 - This tool supports the education of stakeholders’ ability to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students using a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform.

- Michigan—[*School Safety Score*](#)
 - This document includes a description of Michigan’s School Safety Score.
- West Virginia—[*The West Virginia School Climate Index: Validity and Associations With Academic Outcome Measures*](#)
 - This report presents a study that the West Virginia Department of Education conducted to test the validity of the WV School Climate Index.

OBJECTIVE 3.3.3A: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format

Purpose of preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

Toward the end of your data collection process, prepare a document that summarizes your school climate findings across data sources. The summary should provide an overview of the various topic areas of school climate that you assessed, school-level scores on measured topic areas, and district- or CMO/EMO-level data, if available. Depending on the level of detail in your report, you also may want to include item-level data. It is important to highlight key findings identified by your data or by your stakeholders. Finally, the summary report can document change in school climate within a school and among schools across time, if available. Reports should be easy to interpret and accessible to a wide audience of school, community, and family stakeholders, be actionable, and make data results meaningful (e.g., by providing data comparisons). Along with documenting results externally, it may be helpful to create an internal methodological report that contains basic information about data collection methods (e.g., how long was the survey administration window, what time of the year did you administer the survey) and unit-level completion rates.

Strategies for preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

- a. Include details about all data sources, including survey data and other data (e.g., administrative data and focus group data).
- b. Use communication strategies that are effective for your region or audience (e.g., organize “office hours” or translate to diverse languages, if needed). Use strategies identified in *Objective 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data.*
- c. Make findings easily accessible in a timely manner (e.g., before the start of the school year).

3.3.3A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Annual (or biannual) summary reports, distributed to students, staff, families, governing boards, and community stakeholders
- Communication documents (e.g., e-mails, social media posts, webpages, or newsletters)
- Methodological report for internal use

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)

- d. Provide both Web-based and printed formats.
- e. Tailor reports to highlight points of importance to specific stakeholder groups.
- f. Include results by respondent groups and by respondent characteristics, as possible.
- g. Highlight successes and reasons why continued support of the initiative is important.

Related resources for preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 5: Sharing School Climate Data With Stakeholders](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice sharing your school climate data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[Baltimore City Schools Sample School Data Report](#)
 - This tool presents a sample school data report along with some follow-up questions to consider when analyzing the data.

Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 4 [3.4A])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practices. At the end of Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, it will be useful to evaluate and refine the procedures that you used to collect, analyze, and report data as well as the strategies you used to engage stakeholders and disseminate findings. In addition, reflect on the type(s) of data you collected, think about your future data and analysis needs, and determine if there are any gaps between the data you will have and the data you need to improve your school climate efforts.

OBJECTIVE 3.4.1A: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

Purpose of reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

When you review your data collection, analysis, and dissemination processes, review the data you collected to ensure they were high quality. In addition, review your administration procedures to ensure that the data were collected consistently throughout your district, CMO/EMO, or school. Specifically, reflect on the following questions: Were you able to collect data systematically across your district, CMO/EMO, or school? Were you able to provide all stakeholders (students, staff, and families) with an opportunity to take the survey? Did stakeholders understand the importance of the effort, thus providing thoughtful and accurate responses? How involved were stakeholders in reviewing and disseminating data? Did they trust the metrics reports? Will they use the results to select appropriate interventions to improve school climate? Finally, are you using other appropriate school climate data sources that provide value-added information when used in conjunction with the EDSCLS?

Strategies for reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

- a. Review any feedback you received from students, staff, or parents/guardians during the survey administration that highlights areas of possible improvement in your survey planning procedures.
- b. Review the types of data and data sources you used to determine if you are collecting the appropriate data to answer your questions.
- c. Review your collaboration with stakeholders to determine if they understand the data and how to use the data to select interventions in Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.

3.4.1A EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document outlining the strengths and areas of improvement in Phase Three
- Document outlining action steps to improve Activity Set 3 efforts

Related resources for reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

- [2012 Grantee TA Symposium: “Merging School Climate in Pursuit of Academic Excellence”](#) (S3)—see presentations and resources listed under “Sustainability” and “Sustaining Innovations.”
 - These presentations and worksheets provide strategies on how to sustain school climate and culture improvement and how to incorporate changes into long-term organization and fiscal plans.

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)



District Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set

Pike Township, Indiana

The goals of the U.S. Department of Education’s Project Prevent grant program, awarded in 2014, include increasing students’ engagement with their schools, as measured with school climate survey data. Many Project Prevent grantee school districts, such as the Metropolitan School District of Pike Township in Indianapolis, Indiana, chose to administer the EDSCLS to track their student engagement during over the course of the five-year grant. In doing so, Pike Township could rely on the EDSCLS platform to perform many of the steps for collecting and reporting data outlined in this activity. Pike Township began administering the EDSCLS survey in the first year of their Project Prevent grant to students in its participating schools. Repeating the survey in the second year and beyond, Pike Township is assured of a reliable trend line in student engagement data across time that accurately represents how students perceive the multiple aspects of engagement, such as the cultural and linguistic competency of their schools, their relationship with peers and adults in the school, and participation in school activities. Pike Township has chosen to implement Second Step, an evidence-based program that addresses student engagement, along with a multi-tiered system of support called Positive Behaviors and Supports.

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)

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

Note: This version of Activity Set 3 is intended for sites using school climate surveys other than the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS). If you are using the EDSCLS platform, which does much of the work in this activity set for you, please click [here](#) to go to a special version of Activity Set 3 that supports users of the EDSCLS platform.

Activity Sets 1 and 2 provide goals and strategies that helped you decide the types of school climate data to collect, develop your data collection infrastructure, and engage stakeholders about school climate improvements, among a host of other activities. In this set of activities, you will leverage the planning and engagement work in Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data.

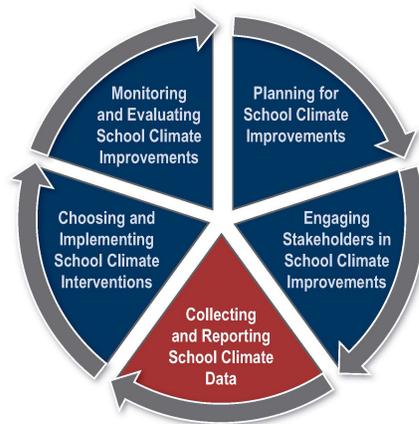
Collecting and reporting on your school climate data for the first time can provide a baseline—or initial assessment—for climate-related characteristics in your state, district, charter authorizer, CMO/EMO, or school. This baseline can help you identify how to improve the climate in your school(s). By subsequently collecting these data multiple times throughout your efforts, you can assess your progress in implementing school climate efforts and the expected outcomes.

This activity set is composed of four action steps: (1) collect data, (2) analyze data, (3) disseminate findings, and (4) evaluate and refine data collection and reporting protocols and continue planning for improvement and sustainability. The main goals of this set of activities are to assess the current state of your school climate and provide opportunities for your stakeholders to understand the data collected. We focus on survey data (as reported by students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, or families²¹) as the primary data source, but other data sources are discussed as well. (See *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data.*) Multiple pieces of data help you assess and report on your school climate (e.g., focus groups and interviews and school administrative data such as attendance, behavior incidents, suspensions and expulsions, and student achievement) and the development of student social and emotional learning skills. The result also can inform other efforts that relate to school climate, such as bullying prevention and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Each of the following objectives will be discussed in Activity Set 3B:

ACTION STEP 1. Collect Data

- **OBJECTIVE 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection**



²¹ Here and throughout, we use the term *families* to refer to parents and guardians.

- [OBJECTIVE 3.1.2B: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.1.3B: Administer surveys to target population\(s\) each school year](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.1.4B: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument\(s\) as necessary](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.1.5B: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.1.6B: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families](#)

ACTION STEP 2. Analyze Data

- [OBJECTIVE 3.2.1B: Ensure high-quality survey data](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.2.2B: Analyze scales \(topic areas\) available in your survey data](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.2.3B: Analyze data across respondent groups \(students, staff, and families\)](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.2.4B: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.2.5B: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available](#)

ACTION STEP 3. Disseminate Findings

- [OBJECTIVE 3.3.1B: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.3.2B: Generate an index score for each school \(optional\)](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 3.3.3B: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format](#)

ACTION STEP 4. Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability

- [OBJECTIVE 3.4.1B: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability](#)

District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Component

Collect Data

(ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 1 [3.1B])

The first action step within this activity set, collecting data, provides objectives and strategies, which when realized, will support subsequent action steps within this activity set. The data collected influence the types of analyses you can conduct and the reports you can disseminate to stakeholders. The objectives and strategies provide information on the data collection process for school climate surveys, as well as other data sources (e.g., focus groups or student social and emotional skills measures). If you decided to collect and analyze climate survey data and also use other data sources (see *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data*), you may be able to compare results across multiple data sources. This may provide a more accurate and complete picture of your climate. In addition, multiple data sources allow you to gather unique information that might not be revealed if you use only one data source. For example, school climate survey data provide perceptions of the outcomes of the school climate process, whereas



focus group and interview data can help you understand the strategies and practices that are being used to promote a positive school climate.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection

Purpose of developing an administration protocol for data collection

Before you collect your school climate data, revisit the administration plan developed through *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data*. This step will help you develop your administration protocol or the directions and expectations you provide to those who are administering the survey. Administration instructions and protocols provide directions to those administering surveys by standardizing the administration procedure, thus promoting systematic data collection. For example, determine the time frame that respondents will have to complete the survey (i.e., the survey administration window). For an online administration, a two- to three-week survey administration window is usually sufficient. In addition, protocols include detailed administration instructions and procedures for your survey administration. Protocols generally include the purpose of the survey, a description of the eligible survey population (i.e., those respondents who are eligible to take the survey), and specific instructions for administration (e.g., a script to read aloud to students before they take the survey). The administration protocol also should include a confidentiality pledge for survey proctors, an example proctor script for in-school student surveys, and consent forms for multiple types of parental consent. In addition, because all potential respondents should have access and an opportunity to participate in data collection, appropriate accommodations (e.g., reading aloud, extended time, or magnification devices) should be available for those needing them. For respondents who need the instrument translated into another language, we suggest an individual or small-group administration with a translator. Many surveys, including EDSCS, come with standardized administration procedures.²²

If you plan to collect more in-depth information through focus groups or interviews, protocols should be developed for these data collection efforts. These protocols should be as detailed as possible and should promote consistency across interviewers.



Districts/CMOs/EMOs using the same school climate survey across all schools should provide them all with the same administration procedures.

Strategies for developing an administration protocol for data collection

- a. Finalize the measures you will use to collect school climate data—for example, surveys, focus groups, and administration data—prior to developing your administration protocol. Based on planning and state or district priorities, review

3.1.1B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Administration protocol for school climate surveys
- Professional development on administration protocol
- Administration protocol for school climate interviews and focus groups

²² For more information about the EDSCS, see <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>. Administration instructions for the EDSCS can be viewed at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls/administration>.



your school climate survey instrument (and any other additional data sources you plan to collect) to ensure that items that align with your vision and logic model are included. Consider whether additional items are needed.²³

- b. Develop the directions that you want to provide survey administrators, such as the survey administration window, a script to read to students or other respondents, how questions about the meaning of survey items from respondents should be handled, the number of items to include in the survey(s), whether teachers should administer surveys to their own students, sampling procedures (if only a subsample of respondents will be participating), and the provision of accommodations.
- c. Include in administration protocols information on how to administer school climate surveys anonymously or in a manner to protect confidentiality of the respondent's personally identifiable information and encourage truthful and accurate responses.
- d. Implement professional development sessions on the administration protocol to disseminate instructions and clarify the protocol.
- e. Consider how you will administer surveys. For example, consider online systems that would allow for automated data entry and report generation compared with paper surveys that do not have a technology requirement but take longer to yield results.
- f. Allow respondents an adequate amount of time to experience the building-level conditions prior to providing their feedback through taking the survey.
- g. Administer the annual school climate survey in the spring (ideal time).
- h. If administering an online survey, plan for a two- to three-week survey administration window.
- i. Ensure that appropriate training is provided as needed to school-level staff and that they know how to access the survey, log students in to the survey, handle students' questions, and maintain privacy.
- j. Determine whether you want to administer the survey to the entire population or to a representative sample of the population. If you opt to survey only a sample of the population, you will need a sampling plan. We recommend working with a sampling statistician if you do not have sampling expertise in-house.
- k. Decide whether all of your stakeholders are eligible for the survey or if exceptions will be made (e.g., For the student survey, will you be able to administer the survey to students with severe cognitive disabilities who are eligible for alternative assessments?).
- l. Determine whether teachers will administer surveys to their own students and how you will provide accommodations for students with disabilities.

²³ Districts and schools also are required to report information about school climate pursuant to the U.S. Department of Education's Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Information collected by surveys on school climate may help schools and districts prepare their responses to the CRDC survey. More information about the CRDC can be found at crdc.ed.gov.



- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)**
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

- m. Implement plans designed earlier in the school climate improvement process to meet minimum response rate targets for all respondent groups. (See *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data.*) Also plan to address diverse cultural and linguistic perspectives so that items are appropriate in a multicultural context. (See *Objective 1.3.3: Identify, adapt, or develop school climate surveys.*)
- n. Determine what respondent characteristic data related to school climate you want to collect (e.g., student race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, free or reduced-price lunch eligibility, disability status, or achievement).
- o. Develop any additional protocols if you decide to collect multiple types of school climate data, for example, interview or focus group protocols.

Related resources for developing administration protocol for data collection

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments [NCSSLE])
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand school climate.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Survey Research Methods](#) (Sage)
 - This book presents information about standards and effective-practice procedures for surveys designed to create a picture or understanding of a group of people.
- [Survey Methodology](#) (Wiley)
 - This book provides a comprehensive overview of survey methodology, including Chapter 5 on the methods of data collection. This chapter provides an overview of the different options for collecting data and guidance on choosing the most appropriate method.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar describes ways to align results with outcome data and properly disseminate that 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.



Related resources from the field

- California—[S3 Cal-SCHLS Survey Administration](#)
 - This webinar is an example of how to outline the technical and logistical details involved in survey collection and presents numerous strategies for improving parent participation.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.2B: Communicate data collection expectations to stakeholders

Purpose of communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

Although the majority of Action Step 2: Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements involves disseminating knowledge about your school climate improvements, it is important to target communication on the purpose and procedures of data collection. These communication strategies should start as soon as you have confirmed the types of data you will be collecting and when you will collect the data. Increase the frequency in which you communicate to stakeholders a few weeks prior to the opening of the data collection window and continue during the data collection period to remind respondents to complete the survey. Be sure your communication materials inform stakeholders why the survey is important and why their participation is needed and valued. By being strategic about your messaging prior to and during data collection, you are more likely to obtain buy-in from stakeholders, as well as achieve a higher response rate from survey respondents. Remember to provide translated communication materials for those members of your school community (e.g., students, families, and noninstructional staff) who are not English speaking, so that they also are informed.

Strategies for communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

- Disseminate information to students through school or classroom announcements, newsletters, and flyers prior to the survey administration.
- Have students introduce the importance of the surveys to their families to increase buy-in and participation.
- Disseminate a targeted advanced mailing with information on the survey to families.
- Disseminate advanced reminders prior to survey administration to the instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families through online platforms (e.g., school or district website, social media, electronic mailing lists, or direct e-mails) and school newsletters.
- Disseminate information to parents through other forms of family engagement strategies (e.g., open houses, parent-teacher organization/association meetings, back-to-school nights, and report card pickup).

3.1.2B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Communication materials (e.g., flyers, newsletters, or online postings)
- Reminder communication materials to instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- f. Provide reminders to complete surveys within the given time frame to instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and families through as many communication vehicles as possible (e.g., e-mail, announcements, and posters).

Related resources for communicating data collection expectations to stakeholders

- [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.
- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Survey Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

Related resources from the field

- California—[Assessing School Climate Summary](#)
 - This summary thoroughly describes priorities the district surveys aim to address, the tools being used, and what information each tool was designed to collect.
- Maryland—[MDS3 Resource Binder, “Data” Section](#) (S3)
 - The resource binder covers numerous school climate topics and devotes an entire section to data collection tools and guidance (see the District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set section for details).
- Michigan—[Introducing the Michigan School Health Survey System](#)
 - This webinar provides an example of an orientation tool for schools to explain the survey system, the tools themselves, and survey implementation tips.

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)



- West Virginia—[*A Critical Component of Implementing: Expected Behaviors in Safe and Supportive Schools*](#) (S3)
 - This presentation shares the vision and goals for the West Virginia school climate survey process and outlines clear expectations for participating schools.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.3B: Administer surveys to target population(s) each school year

Purpose of administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

After you have developed and disseminated your administration instructions and protocols and informed stakeholders of the upcoming data collection, now is the time to administer your survey(s) to your target population(s). Survey data provide you with important information about your school climate. Survey results help you identify your current climate needs, which you can use to inform selection and implementation of interventions (interventions [e.g., evidence-based programs [EBPs] and practices; those showing evidence of promise; strategies, effective practices, and approaches] are discussed further in Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions).

You may want to administer the survey multiple times (no more than three) during the year to use data for continuous improvement. Administer surveys during the same month(s) each year (e.g., in April of each school year) so you have consistent data across time. This approach will help you determine if climate-related interventions are working, for whom, if you need to modify current interventions, or if you need to select new interventions. If you want to identify where and for whom the intervention is working, it will be useful to disaggregate the data collected.



Districts and CMOs/EMOs usually use the same survey across all schools to compare schools and differentiate support.

Strategies for administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

- a. Most student surveys are designed to be administered to students in certain grades (e.g., Grades 5–12). You can survey all students in the appropriate grades, or you may select a representative sample of students in those grades. Refer to the administration protocol you developed in *Objective 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection*.
- b. If you choose to administer to a representative sample rather than to all students, staff, or families, we recommend that you consult with a sampling statistician. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)

3.1.3B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Survey plan for full population (“universe”) or representative sample of target population(s)
- Sampling plan if using a sample of respondents (developed by sampling statistician, if there is no in-house expertise)

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)



- c. Consider surveying all school staff (not just teachers), including teacher aides, paraprofessionals, and noninstructional staff. Use your administration protocol developed through *Objective 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection*.
- d. Survey families, using your administration protocol developed through *Objective 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection*.

Related resources for administering surveys to target population(s) each school year

- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Survey Administration](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on effective practices when administering school climate surveys, including how to administer surveys to a variety of populations, modes of administration, and logistics (i.e., timeline for prepping, administering, analyzing, and reporting data).
- [Survey Methods for Educators: Selecting Samples and Administering Surveys \(Part 2 of 3\)](#) (Institute of Education Sciences)
 - This guide presents tips for administering surveys and generalizing results.

Related resources from the field

- California—[Making Sense of School Climate: Using the California School Climate, Health, and Learning \(Cal-SCHLS\) Survey System to Inform Your School Improvement Efforts](#) (S3)
 - This reference guide provides an overview to the questions related to school climate assessed by the three Cal-SCHLS surveys. It is designed as a reference tool to help survey users consider the connections across the surveys and illuminate the relevance of all the survey items to school improvement.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.4B: Confirm the reliability of scales and revise instrument(s) as necessary

Purpose of confirming the reliability of scales and revising instrument(s) as necessary

After your initial data collection, it is important to establish the reliability of the survey measures with the population(s) being surveyed. Reliability refers to the degree to which participants consistently respond to items within a scale, whereas validity refers to the degree to which the survey item measures what it is intended to measure. Reliability and validity analysis

ensures that your survey measures what it is intended to measure (i.e., it is assessing the different dimensions of school climate that you are trying to capture) in a consistent way in your target population (e.g., students Grades 5–12). If the survey you are using does not provide this

Note that the EDSCLS has already confirmed the reliability of scales. If you employ another survey, ensure that its items and scales are reliable and valid.

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)



information for you, and you do not have the required analytical skills in-house, we recommend that you work with an evaluation partner to run these analyses for you. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)

Strategies for confirming the reliability of scales and revising instrument(s) as necessary

- a. Determine if the survey you are using provides reliability data for its scales. If not, use the services of an in-house statistician or partner with an evaluation contractor to run these analyses for you. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)
- b. If the reliability results of any scale(s) are not acceptable, revise the content of the scales.
- c. Pilot test the revised survey by administering it to a sample of respondents who represent the main respondent characteristics in the population. Then re-analyze the reliability of the scales to ensure that they are acceptable for operational administration to the full population of interest.

3.1.4B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Data output from reliability analyses
- Summary of data issues (e.g., data limitations, missing data, or data anomalies) and ways to resolve them; list of corrections and revised instrument for administering pilot test
- Final version of survey for next operational administration

Related resources for confirming the reliability of scales and revising instrument(s) as necessary

- [Evaluating the Reliability of Surveys and Assessments](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents ways to determine whether the survey items actually measure the underlying concepts they are intended to measure. Topics include the purpose and characteristics of reliability and its analysis, as well as common methods of reliability analysis for various types of data.
- [Survey Development](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focuses on the development of school climate surveys/measures. The content includes extant measures/surveys, vetted measures versus pretesting new items, individual items versus scales, and creating and using table shells upfront for later data population.
- [School Climate Survey Compendium](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This compendium lists valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate to assist educators in efforts to identify and assess their conditions for learning.

Related resources from the field

- New York City—[Strengthening Assessments of School Climate: Lessons From the NYC School Survey](#)
 - This resource summarizes findings from a New York City School Survey, including lessons learned and recommended steps for collaborative approaches.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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

- West Virginia—School Climate Index reports: [*The West Virginia School Climate Index: A Measure of School Engagement, Safety, and Environment*](#) and [*The West Virginia School Climate Index: Validity and Associations With Academic Outcome Measures*](#)
 - These reports provide an explanation of the West Virginia School Climate Index and report school-level safety scores.

OBJECTIVE 3.1.5B: Collect and review other school-level data related to school climate

Purpose of collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

Although surveys provide broad, quantifiable, and confidential information about how people perceive and experience school, other data can help you build an even more complete picture of your district, CMO/EMO, or school environment. To fully assess your district/CMO/EMO's or school's climate, it is useful to supplement your survey data with data from other sources, such as administrative data (e.g., incidents, attendance, academic outcomes, and discipline). (See *Objective 1.3.4: Select other types of school climate data* for further explanation of these data sources.) It is likely that some or all of these administrative data are already being collected in your district or school; examining them in tandem with your survey data can help you identify whether there is alignment among these multiple data points. For example, compare student perceptions of safety in the survey data with the rate of violent incidents or compare student reports of staying home because of feeling unsafe at school with attendance data.

When there is agreement among data sources, you can draw stronger conclusions. If there is little or no agreement among data sources, there could be multiple reasons why a disconnect occurs—whether it be inconsistent data collection procedures or inaccurate instruments. For example, teachers within schools do not always complete behavioral incident reports consistently. If data do not correlate with each other, do not force an explanation but instead determine why inconsistencies exist and help stakeholders understand how and where perceptions vary.

Strategies for collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

- a. Ensure teachers there is consistency among teachers when completing behavior incident reports.
- b. Obtain the current school year's administrative data so they correspond to the timing of survey data.
- c. Include data on positive student behaviors (e.g., student social and emotional skills, awards, volunteering efforts, and prosocial behaviors).

3.1.5B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Administrative data reports for each school
- An aggregated report summarizing conditions across schools using administrative data and other student outcome data
- Data systems that connect various pieces of data collected
- Reports that summarize the analysis of the multiple pieces of data collected

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- d. Cross-tabulate school-level school climate survey data, school-level incident or disciplinary data, and school-level academic performance measures to identify the relationships between and among different variables.
- e. If you plan to link student-level survey data to administrative data, you can analyze the relationship among school climate perceptions, incident or disciplinary data, and achievement to better understand the relationship between and among how students perceive their school and their achievement, prosocial behaviors, and risky behaviors.
 - Be sure you have the data infrastructure to both de-identify and still connect multiple data sources at the student level. (See *Objective 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure [e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems].*)
- f.  Determine how you will keep track of the assignment of student login credentials. Note that you will need to use the appropriate consent language to link student data to administrative records. Support consistency of incident and other data collected among schools through backup materials and training. Backup materials can include definitions, rubrics, and anchoring items. Training can include coaching and supervision.

Related resources for collecting and reviewing other school-level data related to school climate

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- [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.
- [Understanding Student Discipline Practices in Charter Schools: A Research Agenda](#) (Center for Reinventing Public Education)
 - This report describes the kinds of methods and data that will allow for useful sector comparisons, as well as other things you can learn from and about charter schools on the topic of discipline in schools.

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[Cost of Incidents: Administrative and Instruction Costs to Conduct Office Discipline Referrals](#)
 - This tool allows users to use a spreadsheet to compare current costs of incidents with costs and benefits after implementation of programs and strategies.
- Maryland—[Report Card Grades Earned and Risk Behaviors Graph](#) (S3)
 - This resource demonstrates how to graphically compare school and district grade and incident data with state data.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- Maryland—[MDS3 Resource Binder, “Data” Section](#) (S3)
 - The resource binder covers numerous school climate topics and devotes an entire section to data collection tools and guidance (see the District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set section for details).

OBJECTIVE 3.1.6B: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

Purpose of conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

Survey data and administrative data provide quantitative information that helps you understand your current school climate and assess your ongoing efforts. Focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families, conversely, provide context for survey data and allow you to investigate perceptions of school climate and the outcomes of your school climate efforts more closely. Focus group and interviews can provide information about how the school climate improvements that you put in place are working. Analyzing your survey data (See Activity Set 3, Action Step 2: Analyze Data) reports the breadth of school climate, allowing you to target the areas for more in-depth information from focus groups or interviews. For example, if your school’s scores on a particular scale or topic area are lower than you would like, focus groups can help you investigate why. Similarly, if a handful of schools in your district are making large gains in a particular topic area, interviewing the leadership in those schools can help you determine how they are achieving that success. Focus group and interview data can provide rich information about school climate, providing stakeholders with an opportunity to voice their concerns as well as discuss areas that they want to keep improving and growing as a school community. As such, focus groups and interviews are typically conducted after you have analyzed your survey results to obtain a deeper look into the survey results.

Both districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools need to consider who will participate in the focus groups and interviews, ensuring that participants represent as many subgroups (e.g., race/ethnicity; English learners; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) of the population as possible. In addition, you should take the time to consider the type of information that you want to gather from stakeholders during this process because it may supplement other data collection efforts. If you do not have the capacity to collect and analyze focus group and interview data, consider partnering with an outside organization that has experience with this type of data collection. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)



Districts/CMOs/EMOs should consider whether they want to conduct focus groups and interviews across the district/CMO/EMO or at the school level.

Strategies for conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

- a. Review resources on how to intentionally design focus group protocols.
- b. Develop focus group or interview protocols that focus on the information you most want to gather.

- Introduction
- Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)
- Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3A)
- Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, Non-EDSCS Users (ACTIVITY SET 3B)**
- Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)
- Monitoring and Evaluating Overall School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 5)

- c. Select an appropriate sample of participants who vary across key respondent characteristics to engage in the focus group and interview process.
- d. Create translated materials for those who are non-English speakers, if applicable.
- e. Determine how to analyze your focus group and interview findings.
- f. Create a zone of safety to maximize participants' willingness to respond candidly and honestly.
- g. Use a focus group facilitator who does not have the ability to punish or reward people for their responses.
- h. Record focus groups if participants feel comfortable with your doing so.
- i. Determine if you want to collect focus group and interview data at the district/CMO/EMO or school level.

3.1.6B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List of students, staff, or family to participate in focus groups and interviews
- Focus group and interview protocols
- Transcribed or detailed notes of focus group and interview content
- Reports that summarize the focus group and interview findings
- Processes that help triangulate the quantitative and qualitative data (i.e., compare-and-contrast survey and administrative data with focus group and interview findings)

Related resources for conducting focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families

- [*Measuring School Climate: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts*](#) (The Colorado Education Initiative)
 - This toolkit from the Colorado Education Initiative provides tips for creating and using a focus group on page 14.
- [*Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait*](#) (National Institute for Urban School Improvement)
 - This guide highlights how a focus group can be used to provide continuous outcome feedback. Covered in this resource is how a focus group is defined, created, and used as an evaluation tool.
- [*Promoting Student Voice Through Student Focus Groups*](#) (Institute for Character Education)
 - This document provides guidelines for conducting fishbowl focus groups with students.
- [*Using Focus Groups to Get Student Feedback*](#) (Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation at Carnegie Mellon University)
 - This guide provides direction for collecting data with focus groups that can be adapted for precollege students.

Analyze Data

(ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 2 [3.2B])

After you collect your school climate data (surveys, administrative data, behavioral incident data, and focus groups and interviews), you will analyze them. Many of the objectives within Action Step 1, Collect Data, reference data analysis, but this section discusses data analysis topics in more detail: (1) ensuring high-quality data; (2) analyzing the scales (topic areas) of school climate; (3) analyzing data for the entire population and by respondent characteristics; (4) disaggregating data by respondent group (students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, and family); and (5) comparing data to other schools in the district, state, or nation. If you are checking data yourself or working with an evaluation partner, we present the following information as a resource for you.

OBJECTIVE 3.2.1B: Ensure high-quality survey data

Purpose of ensuring high-quality survey data

High-quality data are the foundation of good data analysis and allow you to be confident of the results. Thus, high response rates and efficient data management (i.e., understanding the quality and content of the data) is a crucial first step in analyzing data. The main consideration in data management is to examine your data for errors or anomalies and to clean and edit the data appropriately. For example, for a paper survey, check that handwritten values are within a valid range (e.g., a question that asks “How many days this school year?” could not have a valid response of 500) and that other data-entry errors have not been made. Online surveys, conversely, do not allow respondents to make errors, but you can check to be sure individual respondents did not log in more than once or repeat the survey in multiple languages or under multiple grade levels, depending on your platform. In addition, for paper and online administrations, you can check your data for anomalies such as logic violations (i.e., a set of responses that contradict each other) as well as assess the response rate for individual items and the quantity of missing data.

Strategies for ensuring high-quality survey data

- a. Find or develop a list of survey data quality checks (e.g., develop a plan for dealing with missing data and data anomalies).
- b. Determine criteria for respondent eligibility, and only produce scale scores for respondents that meet these criteria (e.g., answering a minimum number of survey items).
- c. Identify items that have low response rates and develop a plan to improve item-level response rates for subsequent collections (e.g., reducing the number of items, giving respondents additional time to take the survey, or presenting blocks of items in a different order).

3.2.1B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List of data quality checks and plan for resolution of anomalies and missing data
- Respondent eligibility criteria
- Survey data output that assesses missing values and response rates and variability per item
- Unit level response rates

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- d. Look at your item distributions to make sure they are variable (i.e., if almost everyone in your population answers “yes” or “strongly agree” to a survey item, the lack of variability in the responses indicates that the item may not be useful).
- e. Assess your unit-level response rate (i.e., the percentage of eligible respondents who complete the survey) and develop a plan to improve it, if the response rate is lower than desired.

Related resources for ensuring high-quality survey data

- [Survey Management](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers important components of survey management for school climate projects. Topics include connecting items with research questions, effective practices for administering surveys, how results can guide future interventions, data issues, and getting schools and stakeholders to invest in the process.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Best Practices in Research](#) (American Association for Public Opinion Research)
 - This tool lists effective practices for ensuring survey and survey data quality.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

OBJECTIVE 3.2.2B: Analyze scales (topic areas) available in your survey data

Purpose of analyzing scales (topic areas) available in your survey data

After each data collection, for each scale (topic area) and each respondent group (e.g., students), you can calculate the scale scores and item-level results for your data. Certain school climate survey packages, including the EDSCLS, will produce these results for you. These findings can be used to determine which areas of climate are perceived the most positively and negatively in your district or school. When you know your strengths and your areas in need of improvement, you will be able to make an informed and data-driven choice of interventions. In addition, these analyses will inform the development of your school climate goals and monitor progress toward those goals.

3.2.2B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Report summarizing scale scores and item-level results for each scale for each respondent group, overall and by respondent characteristics
- Report comparing current year results from previous year(s) to consider changes in targets across time

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)



Strategies for analyzing scales (topic areas) available in your survey data

- a. Create scale scores for your school climate scales. Psychometric analysis (such as factor analysis or item response theory) often is used to produce survey scale scores, but other approaches can be used. If you do not have access to a statistician in house, consider consulting with an evaluation partner to determine how to create your scales. (See *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities].*)
- b. Create item-level results for your topic areas of school climate. Item-level results often are presented as item distributions (i.e., the percentage of respondents who selected each response option) as well as the mean or average response value of each item.
- c. Use your scale scores to prioritize the school climate scales or topic areas that you want to focus on. (See the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) for more information on using scale scores overall and by respondent characteristics.)
- d. Use the item-level results to look deeper into the school climate topics that you want to focus on that may be more immediately actionable for schools. (See the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) for more information on using item-level data.)
- e. Compare scale scores and item-level results from previous data collection efforts to determine change across time.
- f. Use additional resources to help analyze and interpret the data. For example, use the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) and [Topical Discussion Guides](#) in the [Resource Package](#) to help you interpret and use your data to improve specific school climate topic areas overall and to help you implement multi-tiered systems of support.

Related resources for analyzing scales (topic areas) available in your survey data

- [Data Interpretation Guide](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This guide provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various school climate survey data.
- [Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides](#) (NCSSLE)
 - These guides provide information to assist with using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas overall and by a multi-tiered system of supports as applicable.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- [American Association for Public Opinion Research Website](#) (AAPOR)
 - This website includes resources with effective practices, including webinars and guides, focused on advancing the science and practice of survey and opinion research to give people a voice in the decisions that affect their daily lives.

Objective 3.2.3B: Analyze data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

Purpose of analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

If you decided to survey more than one respondent group (students, instructional and noninstructional staff, or families), comparing their perceptions can be valuable both because members of each group are able to see different things and because they may respond differently to the same factors. For example, if students, staff, and families generally report similar perceptions about a school climate topic area, this alignment suggests consistency in how the groups are perceiving the climate. However, if you identify discrepancies among respondent groups, you may want to collect deeper qualitative information to understand the differences between stakeholders. (See *Objective 3.1.6B: Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families.*) Identifying differences between stakeholders allows you to target interventions specific to each group ensuring that everyone has the supports to experience a positive school climate.

Strategies for analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

- a. If your survey is designed to be comparable across respondent groups, you can compare scale scores across students, staff, and families, as appropriate.
- b. Compare mean topic area values and item-level results on each topic area across students, staff groups, and families.
- c. If possible, rank or graph data to provide easy visuals for identifying needs and gaps.

3.2.3B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Report that provides results by respondent group
- Report that provides results from each respondent group across years to determine change across time

Related resources for analyzing data across respondent groups (students, staff, and families)

- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

- 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)

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[MDS3 Resource Binder, “Data” Section](#)
 - The resource binder covers numerous school climate topics and devotes an entire section to data collection tools and guidance (see the District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set section for details).

OBJECTIVE 3.2.4B: Examine data by respondent characteristics of interest

Purpose of examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

Although it is important to understand your students’, staffs’, and families’ perceptions of a school’s climate, it also is important to analyze data by respondent characteristics to determine if there are different perceptions of school climate within a respondent group. Respondent characteristics can include demographic characteristics of students, staff, or families (e.g., race/ethnicity or gender) and other characteristics such as students’ grade level, free or reduced-price lunch status, or English learner status plus teachers’ years of experience. Analyzing data by respondent characteristics helps you identify the needs, challenges, and successes that are specific to groups of respondents. This approach also will help inform the selection of interventions, determine if you need to target or differentiate supports to different groups, and provide insight into what you are doing well. To disaggregate your data, ensure you collect basic respondent characteristics during data collection or link your student data set to school administrative records. (See *Objective 3.1.1B: Develop an administration protocol for data collection.*)

Strategies for examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

- Determine which respondent characteristics you want to (or are able to) analyze. We recommend that at least 10 people within a respondent characteristic respond to report results by that characteristic.
- Ensure that you have the appropriate demographic data from administrative records matched with the survey data. (See *Objective 1.3.8: Develop or upgrade resource infrastructure [e.g., website, staff portals, electronic mailing lists, and information systems].*)
- Analyze domains or topic areas of school climate by the respondent characteristics of interest. If there are subgroups of interest that are too small to report, consider collecting in-depth information from these groups through one-on-one interviews or focus groups.
- If possible, rank or graph data to provide easy visuals for identifying needs and gaps.
-  Analyze data by respondent group at different levels of aggregation (e.g., school, district, CMO/EMO, charter authorizer, or state), if possible.

3.2.4B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Report that provides results from analysis by respondent characteristics
- Report that provides results by respondent characteristics by year to determine change across time

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)



Related resources for examining data by respondent characteristics of interest

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.
- [Analysis of Survey Data](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar contains effective practices for data analysis, creating school climate scores, and presenting data.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

OBJECTIVE 3.2.5B: Compare data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

Purpose of comparing data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

As discussed in *Objective 1.3.5: Develop a plan to collect, manage, and analyze school climate data*, it is sometimes difficult to interpret school climate scores. Using comparison points can help with this interpretation.

If state or national data are available, districts, CMOs/EMOs, and schools can compare their schools against these data. Benchmarks also can help interpret data. For example, the EDSCS will incorporate benchmarks for school climate in fall 2017.



Districts and CMOs/EMOs that are helping support school climate improvements can help schools understand their data by providing comparison points such as school-to-district/CMO/EMO or school-to-school comparisons.

Strategies comparing data to other schools, the district/CMO/EMO, or state and national data, if available

- a. Determine what data are available for comparison for each respondent group from which you have collected data.
- b. Compare your school-level data (e.g., scale scores) against available district, CMO/EMO, state, or national data.
- c. Compare your school-level data (e.g., scale scores) against data from other schools of similar size, urbanicity, and demographic makeup, if information is available.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- 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)

- d.  Compare district- or CMO/EMO-level data (e.g., scale scores) against available state or national data.
- e.  Districts/CMOs/EMOs can allow their schools to see each other's scores so that they can make school-to-school comparisons, particularly regarding schools that are similar to them.

3.2.5B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Available district, CMO/EMO, state, or national data
- Available data from other schools in the district or CMO/EMO of similar composition
- Reports that compare school data to district, CMO/EMO, state, or national data

Related resources for comparing data to other schools, other schools, to the district/CMO/EMO, charter authorizer or to state and national data, as appropriate and if available

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 3: Putting Your Data in Context](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice putting your school climate data in context.
- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard-copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).
- [Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education](#) (Institute of Education Sciences)
 - This guide provides a framework, tools, and vocabulary needed to support data-informed conversations and action in education. It walks users through five key steps in using data for decision making and strategic action: setting the stage, examining the data, understanding the findings, developing an action plan, and monitoring progress and measuring success.

Related resources from the field

- Iowa—[Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate](#), Step 1: Determining Our Focus
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

Disseminate Findings (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 3 [3.3B])

Following your data analysis and report development, disseminate the findings to your stakeholders. This process involves developing user-friendly reports that stakeholders can use to review the findings from the school climate data collection and analysis. These reports allow members of the school community to make informed choices when selecting interventions and improving the school climate efforts. Because you may be delivering the reports to multiple stakeholders, the language you use should be easily digestible to all groups. If the reports are being delivered to specific stakeholder groups, the language should be easily digestible and address the interests of each respective group. In addition, you may want to target reports for those groups that are not be used to reading and comprehending reports of data findings compared with more technical reports for those stakeholders who are more data savvy.

This action step provides three objectives that help you disseminate your data, one of which is optional. These objectives include (1) involving stakeholders in the review of data and dissemination of findings; (2) generating a single school-level climate rating, if it is desired (optional); and (3) preparing a summary of findings from data analyses in a user-friendly format.

OBJECTIVE 3.3.1B: Involve stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

Purpose of involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

Members of the school community and other stakeholders can and should play a key role in helping you review summary findings and determine key priorities from the school climate data. Involving them in the review process leverages support across audiences, facilitates their understanding of the data, and helps you determine how to share the information. When stakeholders have the opportunity to dig into the data, they are more likely to understand how the data fit into their work and trust the results from the data. In addition, if stakeholders know that the choice of interventions will be based at least in part on their review of the data, it will enhance their buy-in to the interventions and their implementation. (See Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.) Stakeholders also can aid in planning how to disseminate the findings to other entities, such as the public, other education agencies, and specific members of stakeholder groups.

Strategies for involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

- a. Plan meetings with stakeholders that balance enough structure for them to review results with enough flexibility to consider their input.
- b. Allow sufficient time and supports for participants to review the materials before decisions are made.

3.3.1B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Face-to-face meetings or interactive webinars with district, school, family, or community stakeholders
- Dissemination plan that includes stakeholder input

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- c. Allow sufficient time for participants to understand the relationship between multiple data sources.
- d. Set goals for improving data points; use specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound (SMART) goals (see the related resources).
- e. Present data to stakeholders using graphs or other visual products. Consider the needs of different audiences when preparing data summaries.
- f. Allow members of your school community to review the data reports and determine key takeaways from the data (e.g., what the school is doing well and what the school needs to do to improve).
- g. Provide opportunities for participants to help plan dissemination priorities.

Related resources for involving stakeholders in data review and planning for dissemination of findings

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 5: Sharing School Climate Data With Stakeholders](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to practice sharing your school climate data.
- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 3](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- [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 demonstrates 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.
- [Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Time Bound \(SMART\) Objectives](#) ([webpage](#)) ([document](#)) (Centers for Disease Prevention and Control)
 - These resources provide a framework for strategizing next steps for programs after looking at data from school climate survey(s).

Related resources from the field

- Michigan—[Data, Data, Data: How to Make Sense of It All](#) (S3)
 - This webinar shares the Michigan S3 short- and long-term vision for its school climate data, explains the school data collection action plan, and shows schools how to interpret and report the data.





OBJECTIVE 3.3.2B: Generate an index score for each school (optional)

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)

Purpose of generating an index score for each school

Some districts and CMOs/EMOs that have multiple schools participating in school climate improvements may want to generate school-level climate ratings for each participating school, often called a “school climate index” score. Creating a school climate index score may allow for directly comparable and actionable metrics that cut across schools, enabling you to monitor and track change in school climate at the building level. In addition, it can serve as an aid to school staff and families as they see change in their school’s score across time. The development of a school climate index will vary depending on the number and type of data sources that you want to include in the metric and how you want to integrate them within the index score. (See *Objective 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data* to help you generate your school climate ratings.)

Strategies for generating an index score for each school

- Ensure that measures included in the index are stable and consistent, are able to move with real-world change, and can detect sufficient differences among schools.
- Develop scoring system prior to data collection and analysis and incorporate scales from student surveys, adult surveys, and other incident and administrative data, as desired.
- Include both risk and protective factors in your school climate rating.
- Develop a formula for a school climate index score and apply it consistently to data from each participating school.

3.3.2B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Metric for generating school climate index scores
- Formula for index applied consistently to data from each school
- School climate ratings for each participating school

Related resources for generating an index score for each school

- [School Safety Score Considerations: Construction, Quality, Utility](#) (NCSSLE Presentation)
 - This presentation demonstrates the purpose of school safety scores, the importance and implications of policy and data context for score development, methods for determination of score content domains and items, how to establish data quality and score formula, and how to present the scores.

Related resources from the field

- Arizona—[Climate Index](#)
 - This webpage includes a description of the climate index, the formula to calculate the index, and how to appropriately interpret the index scores.

- California—[*School Climate Report Card*](#)
 - This webpage includes a description of the School Climate Index (SCI) and a link to information on the methodology to calculate the SCI.
- Georgia—[*College and Career Ready Performance Index*](#)
 - This tool supports the education of stakeholders' ability to promote college and career readiness for all Georgia public school students using a comprehensive school improvement, accountability, and communication platform.
- Michigan—[*School Safety Score*](#)
 - This document includes a description of Michigan's School Safety Score.
- West Virginia—[*The West Virginia School Climate Index: Validity and Associations With Academic Outcome Measures*](#)
 - This report presents a study that the West Virginia Department of Education conducted to test the validity of the WV School Climate Index.

OBJECTIVE 3.3.3B: Prepare a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminate in a user-friendly format

Purpose of preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

Toward the end of your data collection process, prepare a document that summarizes your school climate findings across data sources. The summary should provide an overview of the various topic areas of school climate that you assessed; school-level scores on measured topic areas; school climate index scores (if you developed them); as well as comparisons to district, CMO/EMO, state, or national data, if available. Depending on the level of detail in your report, you also may want to include item-level results. It is important to highlight key findings identified by your stakeholders. Finally, the summary report can document change in school climate within a school and among schools across time, if available. Reports should be easy to interpret and accessible to a wide audience of school, community, and family stakeholders; include areas of school climate that need improvement and are actionable; and make data results meaningful (e.g., by providing data comparisons). Along with documenting results externally, it may be helpful to create an internal methodological report that contains information about data collection methods (e.g., how long was the survey administration window, what time of the year did you administer the survey) and unit-level completion rates.



Strategies for preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

- a. Include details about all data sources, including survey data and other data (e.g., administrative data, focus groups, and interviews).
- b. Use communication strategies that are effective for your region or audience (e.g., organize “office hours” or translate to diverse languages, if needed). Use strategies identified in *Objective 1.3.7: Develop a plan for disseminating findings from school climate data*.
- c. Make findings easily accessible in a timely manner (e.g., before the start of the school year).
- d. Provide both Web-based and printed formats.
- e. Tailor reports to highlight points of importance to specific stakeholder groups.
- f. Include results by respondent groups and by respondent characteristics, as possible.
- g. Highlight successes and reasons why continued support of effort is important.

3.3.3B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Annual (or biannual) summary reports, distributed to students, staff, families, and community stakeholders
- Communication documents (e.g., e-mails, social media posts, webpages, or newsletters)
- Methodological report for internal use

Related resources for preparing a summary of findings from data analyses and disseminating in a user-friendly format

- [Reporting and Dissemination](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses reporting and disseminating school climate data. It contains various topics, including consideration of audience, content of message, delivery (e.g., hard copy media, online, or electronic mailing lists), interpreting the data (including cautions), connecting survey and outcome (achievement) data, connecting survey results with interventions, and choosing and implementing appropriate intervention(s).

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[Baltimore City Schools Sample School Data Report](#)
 - This tool presents a sample school data report along with some follow-up questions to consider when analyzing the data.
- California—[The School Climate Report Card Webinar](#) (S3)
 - This webinar offers a discussion of California’s School Climate Report Card that the California Department of Education developed for its S3 schools and how to use it to identify areas of school climate in need of improvement.

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)



- 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)

- California—[*Improving School Climate and Academic Achievement in California*](#) (S3)
 - This report from the two-year point in the S3 grant, describes California’s progress to date, including early improvements in school climate and student academic achievement.
- Maryland—[*MDS3 Resource Binder, “Data” Section*](#)
 - The resource binder covers numerous school climate topics and devotes an entire section to data collection tools and guidance (see the District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set section for details).

Evaluate and Refine Data Collection and Reporting Protocols and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 3, ACTION STEP 4 [3.4B])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practice. At the end of Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, it will be useful to evaluate and refine the procedures that you used to collect, analyze, and report data, as well as the strategies you used to engage stakeholders and disseminate findings. In addition, reflect on the type(s) of data you collected, think about your future data and analysis needs, and determine if there are any gaps between the data you will have and the data you need to improve your school climate efforts.

OBJECTIVE 3.4.1B: Review data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

Purpose of reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

When you review your data collection, analysis, and dissemination processes, review the data you collected to ensure it was high-quality data. In addition, review your administration procedures to ensure that the data were collected consistently throughout your district or school. Specifically, reflect on the following questions: Were you able to collect data systematically across your district or school? Were you able to provide all stakeholders (students, staff, and families) with an opportunity to take the survey? Did stakeholders understand the importance of the effort, thus providing thoughtful and accurate responses? In addition, review your data analysis procedures—were you able to answer the questions that you needed to answer? Finally, how involved were stakeholders in reviewing and disseminating data? Did they trust the metrics reports? Will they use the results to select appropriate interventions to improve school climate?

Strategies for reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

- a. Review any feedback you received from students, staff, or parents/guardians during the survey administration that highlights areas of possible improvement in your survey planning procedures.
- b. Review the types of data and data sources you used to determine if you are collecting the appropriate data to answer your questions.
- c. Review your data collection procedures to determine if there are more efficient and effective ways to collect data.
- d. Review your data analysis procedures to determine if you are using the appropriate analysis to answer pertinent questions that will help you make informed decisions.
- e. Review your collaboration with stakeholders to determine if they understand the data and how to use the data to select interventions in Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.

3.4.1B EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document outlining the strengths and areas of improvement in Phase 3
- Document outlining action steps to improve Activity Set 3 efforts

Related resources for reviewing data collection efforts and data infrastructure for sustainability

- [2012 Grantee TA Symposium: “Merging School Climate in Pursuit of Academic Excellence”](#) (S3)—see presentations and resources listed under “Sustainability” and “Sustaining Innovations.”
 - These presentations and worksheets provide strategies on how to sustain school climate and culture improvement and how to incorporate changes into long-term organization and fiscal plans.

District or State Example of Collecting and Reporting Data Activity Set

Maryland

Maryland closely followed the data collection and reporting steps outlined in this manual. In this section, we focus on resources MDS3 developed to aid in the process. In an effort to ensure high-quality data collection, analysis, and reporting, MDS3 developed a comprehensive, online resource collection for use by school leadership and climate coaches. This collection—called the [MDS3 Resource Binder](#)—devoted an entire section to data collection tools and guidance. Many of the data resources integrate multiple steps of the collection, analysis, and dissemination process.

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)



Throughout them all, a consistent theme is present—MDS3 posed the following key questions to school staff at every opportunity and used the tools it developed to empower school staff to be able to answer the questions on their own:

- Are we collecting the right data, in the right format, at the right time?
- What does your data tell you?
- How do we use data to develop an action plan and select interventions?
- Are data used for decision making by all?
- How can you effectively communicate and leverage data to get support and buy in?

California

California Safe and Supportive Schools worked in partnership with WestEd to perform its data collection, which included a series of surveys, administrative data, and qualitative information from stakeholder focus groups. A comprehensive [website](#) describes the data system. To communicate data collection expectations, California created a brief titled [Assessing School Climate](#), which thoroughly describes the district priorities the surveys aim to address, the tools being used, and what information each tool was designed to collect. To assist schools in understanding, analyzing, and disseminating data, California also developed a collection of resources, including an overarching webpage [Making Sense of School Climate](#), the [Workbook for Improving School Climate](#), and a series of [What Works Briefs](#).

To get input from those affected by school climate, California conducted focus groups with staff and students. Each fall of the S3 grant, student listening circles were conducted. A student listening circle is a special type of focus group involving eight to 10 students who respond to five or six questions determined based on data from their school's California Healthy Kids Survey, with school staff and other concerned adults sitting outside the circle, listening but not speaking. Each spring evaluation site visit included a review of action items determined during the student listening circle activity. These circle activities used data to increase youth voice, promote adult-youth connections, and use student input to drive school improvement. Site visits each spring, conducted by regional technical assistance specialists, included a focus group with the S3 School Climate Team. This activity used a list of seven questions to guide the discussion.

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)



Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

After you understand your school climate strengths and needs through data collection, analysis, and review, you are ready to select, plan for, and implement school climate interventions that target needs identified in your data. Here, in Activity Set 4, you use a data-driven approach to choosing and refining school climate interventions. It also is important to leverage the work in Activity Set 2: Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements because interventions are more likely to be implemented as intended when members of the school community are involved in the process of selecting and implementing the interventions.



This activity set is composed of two action steps: (1) choose, plan for, and implement programmatic interventions; and (2) evaluate and refine the choice of interventions and implementation strategies and continue planning for improvement and sustainability. In addition, strategies within this activity set help you begin thinking about how you will evaluate and sustain the selected interventions during an extended period. Doing this helps you to consider the systems, structures, and practices that make school climate efforts an institutionalized practice in your district, CMO/EMO, or school.

ACTION STEP 1. Choose, Plan for, and Implement Programmatic Interventions

- OBJECTIVE 4.1.1: Review current interventions that address school climate at multiple tiers
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.2: Review summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.3: Assess whether current interventions are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.4: Assess readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.6: Participate in a thoughtful planning process for implementing the selected interventions
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.7: Implement interventions, ensuring fidelity of implementation or appropriate adaptation
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.8: Use data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of interventions
- OBJECTIVE 4.1.9: Continue school climate messaging to districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools at different levels of implementation

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



ACTION STEP 2. Evaluate and Refine the Choice of Interventions and Implementation Strategies and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability

- **OBJECTIVE 4.2.1: Plan how to assess implementation with fidelity across time (e.g., during a five-year period)**

District or State Example of Implementing Programmatic Interventions Component

Choose, Plan for, and Implement Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4, ACTION STEP 1 [4.1])

It is likely that you already are implementing initiatives and interventions that address school climate. However, it is not always the case that they are targeted to your specific needs (i.e., not informed by your school climate data), implemented with fidelity (i.e., not implemented as they were intended to be used), or connected or aligned with one another (i.e., not addressing all needs or not duplicating efforts). The purpose of this action is to review your school climate data with an eye toward identifying those school climate interventions that will best fit your needs.

Thus, revisit the interventions already underway in your school(s) to determine whether you want to continue, modify, discard, or replace them, using your school climate data and your mission and vision to guide your decisions. The nine objectives within this action step help you carefully select, plan for, implement, and evaluate school climate interventions. The suggested strategies provide strategies for reviewing and selecting interventions based on the needs identified in your data and implementing those interventions with fidelity.

DEFINING INTERVENTIONS

“Interventions” encompass specific practices with defined activities, policies, and initiatives; broad strategies, approaches, and effective practices; as well as evidence-based programs (EBPs) and those with evidence of promise.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.1: Review current interventions that address school climate at multiple tiers

Purpose of reviewing current interventions at multiple tiers

Conducting a review of current climate-related interventions helps you understand what climate-related interventions you currently implement, how the interventions relate to each other, and how well they are implemented. In addition, within this objective, you are provided with strategies on how to review your current interventions based on the data collected during Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data. These strategies will help you determine whether you have the organizational capacity to adapt or modify current interventions or implement new ones. (See *Objective 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities*

Use the strategies found in Objective 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers, prior to tackling the objectives within this action goal, as some strategies appear in both places.

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)



revealed by the data.) As you review your climate-related interventions, confirm that you offer interventions through a multi-tiered approach, providing supports to all students and other members of the school community. This approach will ensure that current interventions provide a foundation of universal supports to all students (Tier 1), extra support for those who need more assistance (Tier 2), and intensive and targeted supports for those who most need them (Tier 3).

Strategies for reviewing current interventions at multiple tiers

- a. Refer to the current list of climate-related interventions previously identified (see *Objective 1.1.5: Review data and current interventions being implemented at multiple tiers*) to understand what is being implemented and the extent to which they are implemented as designed, as well as the impact of the interventions, if known.
- b. Consider the scope and focus of climate-related interventions to determine (1) if interventions target the needs identified from the data analysis and (2) if educators implement interventions as intended.
- c. Determine the research base behind the climate-related interventions you currently implement. For example, consider if an external evaluator conducted evaluations of your interventions within your context or if evaluations of the intervention were conducted elsewhere.
- d. Assess the effectiveness of current activities and interventions that are designed to address identified needs based on outcomes and implementation measures.
- e. Develop a matrix that lists the current climate-related interventions and the needs each intervention addresses. This approach helps determine if there are duplicative efforts, as well as how the interventions align to comprehensively support the topic areas of school climate. (You can use this framework when working on *Objective 4.1.3: Assess whether current programs are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers.*)

4.1.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- List of current interventions organized by school climate topic area
- A document listing current interventions, whether they have been evaluated, and findings from the evaluations
- A document mapping current interventions to the needs each is designed to address, using school climate topic areas as a framework

Related resources for reviewing current interventions at multiple tiers

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments [NCSSLE])
 - This online module provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.
- [Student Engagement](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents specific methods for assessing existing programs for opportunities for students to engage in more meaningful ways in school, as well as ways of increasing those opportunities.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- 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)

- [Resource Mapping Tool](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This tool helps identify existing programs, and what tier they serve (universal versus targeted needs), in your school, district, and community that address the priority need or issue you identified in your review of quantitative and qualitative data. Mapping resources supports many processes in school climate improvement efforts, such as identifying gaps in services, logic model development, and deciding which evidence-based programs (EBPs) to implement.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Practices](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This brief provides a framework for identifying key pieces of information you should know to select EBPs. It includes information on identifying EBPs, determining readiness to implement, tracking outcomes, and monitoring fidelity. In the appendix, key questions are summarized in a discussion guide, along with worksheets and resources to help you select an EBP that meets your needs.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for Schools Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module presents strategies and tools for identifying and selecting EBPs for school settings.
- [School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - These 11 briefs contain research and effective practices for implementing school climate improvements, based on the National School Climate Center’s extensive work with the academic community. The practice briefs link specifically to school climate topic domains such as equity, bullying prevention, dropout prevention, and social development.
- [Stages of Implementation Analysis: Where Are We?](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This implementation and planning tool helps you assess, plan, and track implementation activities to improve the success and fidelity of your school’s or district’s selected EBPs.
- [ImpleMap: Exploring the Implementation Landscape](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This planning tool facilitates the evaluation of your school’s or district’s capacity to actively implement programs and helps you clarify what you want to achieve with your intervention and identify which EBPs to use, who will support implementation and how to select and train those individuals, and how you will make the intervention happen.

- [Safe, Supportive, and Successful Schools Step by Step](#) (American Institutes for Research)
 - This guide provides easy-to-follow steps for educators wanting to know more about planning, implementing, and evaluating schoolwide improvement. It includes strategies to address social, ethical, and emotional change for all students; early interventions for some students who exhibit minor behavioral issues; and intensive interventions for the few students in the school who have significant emotional or behavioral issues.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.2: Review summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective

Purpose of reviewing summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective

In Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, you may have developed data reports to disseminate to your stakeholders. During that process, you began to review your data to determine your areas of strength and need. The strategies within this objective help you review results to select interventions to meet identified needs at multiple tiers of support, including how to review multiple types of data (e.g., survey data, focus groups, school administrative and incident data) to inform the climate-related interventions you select. For example, quantitative data (from surveys and administrative data sources) can help you identify what needs to improve (e.g., which topic areas), whereas qualitative data (from focus groups) can help inform why those needs exist and, potentially, ways to improve those identified needs.

In addition, review your results by respondent characteristics. This step helps determine whether you have appropriate interventions in place to address the needs of all members of your school community or only certain groups. Analyzing data by respondent characteristics also helps you with strategies in the next objective (See *Objective 4.1.3: Assess whether current interventions are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers.*) For example, students who are English learners may perceive the instructional environment as less supportive than other groups of students. In this case, you might target certain interventions to your English learners to increase instructional environment supports.

Strategies for reviewing summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective

- a. Review multiple types of data (e.g., survey data, focus groups, school administrative, and incident data) to determine what your needs are and why they might exist and identify potential solutions you can implement. Review data by respondent characteristics and for stakeholder subgroups, if available.

4.1.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document summarizing areas of strength and need in the district, CMO/EMO or school, by tier, which should include any differences found by respondent characteristic and stakeholder group
- Document listing implications for multi-tiered system of support
- Document summarizing shifts in the data you want to see as you implement interventions using a multi-tiered system of support

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- b. Identify your primary areas of strength and the areas of need at multiple tiers. This approach helps you assess what current interventions may be working well that you may choose to continue, as well as areas of need for which you will want to implement interventions. (Review the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) referenced in Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data [Activity Set 3] for recommendations on examining data in relation to universal and targeted needs.)
- c. Identify what future shifts in the data you want to see as evidence that interventions are having an impact on documented needs, at multiple tiers.

Related resources for reviewing summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.
- [Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar discusses strategies for connecting your data to interventions, including how to use school climate data to identify needs, how to identify types of programmatic interventions that can address these needs, and how to select programmatic interventions that can be implemented effectively within a school or district.
- [Data-Based Decision Making](#) (National Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Center)
 - These presentation slides can inform how you use data to develop decisions, design problem statements, determine what data sources you need, and define solutions.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Practices](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This brief provides a framework for identifying key pieces of information you should know to select EBPs. It includes information on identifying EBPs, determining readiness to implement, tracking outcomes, and monitoring fidelity. In the appendix, key questions are summarized in a discussion guide, along with worksheets and resources to help you select an EBP that meets your needs.
- [Evidence-Based Module Series](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This self-paced learning module series provides guidance on selecting, preparing for, and implementing EBPs in school settings.
 - [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for Schools Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module presents strategies and tools for identifying and selecting evidence-based programs for school settings.



Related resources from the field

- Iowa—[Iowa Safe and Supportive Schools Strategy Guide: Quality Rubric](#) (S3)
 - This tool rates programs and curricula based on a review of multiple national registries of EBPs.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.3: Assess whether current interventions are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers

Purpose of assessing whether current interventions are addressing needs at multiple tiers

The strategies within this objective use the strategies within the two objectives discussed previously and guide your work throughout this activity set. Through *Objective 4.1.1: Review current interventions that address school climate at multiple tiers*, you assessed the degree to which your current climate-related interventions met the needs of your students and other stakeholders from a multi-tiered perspective, and through *Objective 4.1.2: Review summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective*, you reviewed your school climate data from a multi-tiered perspective. In the current objective, you combine those efforts to assess whether current climate-related interventions address your needs, as identified by the data at multiple tiers of support. Even if you have climate-related interventions currently in place that are intended to address identified needs, having an intervention does not mean that the intervention is satisfactorily addressing that need. During this process, you can identify whether there are multiple climate-related interventions that meet the same needs, or if there are any gaps between current interventions and needs. In addition, this process helps identify those interventions that you want to continue, modify, replace, or add. Furthermore, by examining how well educators implement current interventions, you identify what you and your staff do really well—expertise that can be leveraged to implement new or adapted interventions.

Strategies for assessing whether current interventions are addressing needs at multiple tiers

- a. Map intended outcomes of the school climate efforts with current climate-related interventions at multiple tiers.
- b. Develop a matrix that maps the intended outcomes and achievements of current climate-related interventions by the identified strengths and needs at multiple tiers. (See *Objective 4.1.2: Review summary of results of data analysis to inform the selection of interventions from a multi-tiered perspective.*)
- c. Identify gaps between needs, strengths, and current interventions at multiple tiers using the matrix map of intended outcomes of interventions.

4.1.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document mapping current interventions to intended outcomes and achievements, at multiple tiers
- Document mapping current interventions with the greatest areas of strength and need, at multiple tiers, identifying gaps and redundancy between interventions and needs
- Document summarizing recommendations for interventions to continue, modify, or substitute for current interventions, at multiple tiers

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)



- d. Identify interventions that are working as intended at multiple tiers (e.g., examine fidelity-tool or checklist and school climate data). (See *Objective 4.1.8: Use data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of a multi-tiered system of behavioral support.*)
- e. Determine why current climate-related interventions may not be working as intended at multiple tiers (e.g., Were implementation resources sufficient? Was training provided? Were interventions implemented with fidelity?). This can be done by collecting additional data about implementation (e.g., teacher focus groups or teacher logs about their levels of implementation and supports, school or classroom observations, or resource check).
- f. Identify interventions that are redundant across needs at multiple tiers.
- g. Identify those interventions you want to continue, modify, or substitute for current interventions, at multiple tiers.

Related resources for assessing whether current interventions are addressing needs at multiple tiers

- [Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar discusses strategies for connecting your data to interventions, including how to use school climate data to identify needs, how to identify types of programmatic interventions that can address these needs, and how to select programmatic interventions that can be implemented effectively within a school or district.
- [Violence Prevention](#) (NCSSLE Webinar featuring Dr. Denise Gottfredson)
 - This webinar provides practical recommendations on how to develop, manage, implement, and sustain a violence prevention strategy. During the presentation, Dr. Gottfredson, an expert in delinquency and delinquency prevention at the University of Maryland, shared research she conducted about assessing program implementation that can be applied generally.
- [Resource Mapping Tool](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This tool helps identify existing programs, and what tier they serve (universal versus targeted needs), in your school, district, and community that address the priority need or issue you identified in your review of quantitative and qualitative data. Mapping resources supports many processes in school climate improvement efforts, such as identifying gaps in services, logic model development, and deciding which EBPs to implement.

Related resources from the field

- Iowa—[Continuum Mapping Guide](#)
 - This guide describes how continuum mapping helps schools or districts view the myriad learning supports that are available to students (e.g., activities, programs, initiatives, and services) and identify which students receive those supports.



- Iowa—[Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate](#), Step 3: Selecting Our Strategy
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.4: Assess readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach

Purpose of assessing readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach

During *Objective 1.1.4: Assess organizational readiness and capacity to undertake a school climate initiative*, you may have assessed your organizational capacity and school readiness to participate in school climate improvements. Now, prior to selecting, planning for, and implementing your chosen climate-related interventions, assess your general readiness to continue and sustain those efforts and innovations you need to implement to support a multi-tiered approach. For example, are you ready and able to invest the necessary resources such as time, materials, and training to support school climate efforts over the long haul? Are you aware of the differentiated supports that are needed for all students (Tier 1); those interventions needed for students who need further assistance (Tier 2); and the intensive, individualized interventions for those students who need more targeted support (Tier 3)? By ensuring that you have the capacity and readiness to implement and support needed interventions, you will be more likely to implement them with fidelity.

Organizational capacity includes creating or expanding the structures within your district or school to determine how various interventions are working together to support not only your universal approaches but also those for Tiers 2 and 3: Are existing interventions an extension of your universal approaches rather than disconnected interventions? Furthermore, your organizational capacity includes the motivation and belief structure of those who are implementing the interventions, as well as those who are receiving them. Do your students, staff, and families believe that the interventions are needed and useful? Because the successful implementation of interventions you select depends on your readiness and capacity, the strategies for this objective may be accomplished in tandem with those for the following *Objective 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data*.

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)



Strategies for assessing readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach

- a. Document the strengths that support a positive school climate as shown in your data to assess what you do well in implementing interventions. Analyze why you implement specific interventions well (e.g., examine fidelity tool/checklist data).
- b. Identify available resources (e.g., time, materials, and training) and brainstorm additional resources that could be secured or reallocated to meet needs at multiple tiers.
- c. Assign individuals to reach out to potential external partners in your school climate efforts (e.g., universities, colleges, or community-based organizations) as well as other resources to support implementing.
- d. Conduct readiness assessment to evaluate general and innovation specific readiness for implementation of multi-tiered interventions (see *Willing, Able* → *Ready* brief in the Related Resources section). Determine if your students, staff, and families have the motivation to engage in the climate-related interventions.

4.1.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Document outlining what you do well in implementing interventions (e.g., results of fidelity tool/checklist evaluation)
- Results of readiness assessment
- Chart outlining potential interventions and associated resources and logistics, at multiple tiers
- Document outlining available and needed resources to implement potential interventions, including potential partners

Related resources for assessing readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach

- [*Willing, Able* → *Ready: Basics and Policy Implications of Readiness as a Key Component for Implementation of Evidence-Based Interventions*](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief defines organizational readiness and the three components readiness is composed of: motivation of people in the organization, organizational capacities (general functioning), and intervention-specific capacities (conditions that support a specific intervention).
- [*Implementing New Programs: The Impact of Current Practice*](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar helps you identify supports and barriers in your current practices, policies, and programs that would affect the success of a new program; steps to create more stable organizational structure; and tasks that will help incorporate new strategies into existing practices.
- [*School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability*](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This brief contains research and effective practices for school climate measurement and assessment based on the National School Climate Center's extensive work with the academic community.

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)

- [Stages of Implementation Analysis: Where Are We?](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This implementation and planning tool helps you assess, plan, and track implementation activities to improve the success and fidelity of your school's or district's selected EBPs.
- [ImpleMap: Exploring the Implementation Landscape](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This planning tool facilitates the evaluation of your school's or district's capacity to actively implement programs and helps you clarify what you want to achieve with your intervention and identify which EBPs to use, who will support implementation and how to select and train those individuals, and how you will make the intervention happen.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Practices](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This brief provides a framework for identifying key pieces of information you should know to select EBPs. It includes information on identifying EBPs, determining readiness to implement, tracking outcomes, and monitoring fidelity. In the appendix, key questions are summarized in a discussion guide, along with worksheets and resources to help you select an EBP that meets your needs.
- [Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module provides strategies and tools for getting ready to implement EBPs in schools.
- [Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings](#)
 - This interactive, self-paced learning module presents strategies and tools for implementing, evaluating, supporting, and sustaining EBPs in schools.

General Resources

- [NCSSLE Webinar Series: Implementation](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar series includes four webinars covering implementation topics, including how to use data to identify programmatic interventions, strategies for program implementation, the impact of current practices on new programs, and how to use evidence-based registries to select programs.
- [Implementation](#) (NCSSLE Webpage)
 - This webpage provides definitions, resources, and systematic recommendations for implementation.



- [The National Implementation Research Network Website](#)

- This website provides implementation resources as well as modules and lessons that you can use to guide your program implementation. Some topics covered in the resources, modules, and lessons are the implementation of age-specific programs such as Early Childhood programs, developing stages and teams, and measuring implementation capacity and success at school and district levels.

Related resources from the field

Sample Readiness Measures

- [Show Me Am I Ready Scale](#) (Missouri Department of Health and Senior Resources)
 - This tool helps you assess your school climate team readiness, as well as provides prompts for discussion around implementation and action steps to enhance readiness.
- [TCU Organizational Readiness for Change Scale](#) (Texas Christian University [TCU] Institute for Behavioral Research)
 - The Organizational Readiness for Change scale by the TCU Institute for Behavioral Research has two scales, one designed for counseling staff and the other designed by directors and supervisors. The scale focuses on needs, resources, staff qualities, and organizational climate.

Sample Tools

- [Sample S3 Local Education Agency Needs Assessment Template](#)
 - This tool helps you connect data from school teachers and staff, students, and parents to domains, interventions, and communication by creating a space that summarizes what data you have, data you may need, what needs the data suggest there are, and how much that data is being used to choose and evaluate programs, as well as communicate needs to the district.
- Wisconsin—[Statement of Need Data Worksheet](#)
 - This tool helps you determine what your school needs by comparing data to other data sets, such as the National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, using this worksheet.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.5: Select or plan to modify interventions based on needs and priorities revealed by the data

Purpose of selecting or modifying interventions based on data

The strategies within this objective are enhanced when combined with the strategies in *Objective 4.1.3: Assess whether current interventions are addressing your identified needs at multiple tiers* in which you aligned current climate-related interventions with the issues revealed by your data and goals identified by your efforts. Carefully review this work to identify (1) those climate-related interventions that have a demonstrated evidence base for improving your priority areas, (2) which interventions have a strong research base but are not being implemented with fidelity, and (3) the interventions that need to be modified to fit your particular needs. If the concern is implementation



- 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)

fidelity, the decision to continue this intervention would require understanding and addressing barriers to implementation, whereas determining to keep the interventions that need to be modified would require discussing, documenting, implementing, and evaluating necessary adaptations to the intervention.

You can review registries of EBPs to understand the array of options and compare similar types of programs. There are many considerations when selecting interventions, including aspects of “contextual fit” such as need, precision, evidence base, efficiency, skills/competencies, cultural relevance, resources, and administrative and organizational support. Other aspects that contribute to a contextual fit include the match between the strategies, procedures, or elements of an intervention and the values, needs, skills, and resources available in a setting. If the evidence base does not fit the needs, you should review promising interventions with clear rationales as to why they may be effective in addressing the identified needs.

Strategies for selecting or modifying interventions based on data

- a. Use all available data to select interventions.
- b. Engage all members of your school community in the selection process.
- c. Review evidence-based registries to identify those interventions that research has shown to be effective with your population of students. Potential registries include the [What Works Clearinghouse](#) from the U.S. Department of Education; [youth.gov](#) from the U.S. government; the [National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices](#) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; [Blueprints for Healthy Development](#) from the University of Colorado–Boulder Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence; the [Model Programs Guide](#) from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\) Guide](#) for elementary, middle, and high school social and emotional learning programs. Consider multiple aspects of the interventions being selected to determine fit, such as how well the core components are defined, what skills and competencies are required of people implementing the intervention, how culturally and linguistically relevant the intervention is for your school community, and what resources are required to implement it effectively (e.g., training, including coverage for substitute teachers, coaching, and materials).
- d. Narrow the list of interventions to a few options and conduct a more detailed analysis of contextual fit for each with your school community.

4.1.5 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Review the document that guides the review of EBP registries
- Document that outlines how potential programs align with contextual fit and organizational capacity
- List of interventions selected and approved



Document summarizing the programs and practices that cut across schools

- e. Contact developers of potential interventions to determine if you have the organizational capacity (logistics and resources) to implement them with fidelity. (Use readiness documents developed earlier in *Objective 4.1.4: Assess readiness to implement interventions and specific innovations that support a multi-tiered approach* to help in determining organizational capacity.)
- f. Reach out to districts, CMOs/EMOs, or schools that are implementing an intervention you are considering to learn about their successes and challenges with implementation.
- g. Determine if potential interventions are feasible based on information gathered from developers.
- h. Coordinate, as much as possible, with interventions that you already implement well and that have a positive effect on your school climate.
- i. Select interventions using their definition of school climate (topic areas) and school climate data (identified needs) to coordinate and integrate efforts, as appropriate (e.g., use the review of current programs and potential interventions).
- j. Enhance implementation of interventions already implemented well (as evidenced through data analysis) and meet the goals of the school climate improvements.
- k. Modify implementation of interventions that meet the goals but may not be implemented effectively (as evidenced through data collection).
- l. Remove interventions that are currently implemented but do not meet identified needs or align with school climate goals.
- m. Implement new interventions if current interventions are not meeting all identified needs.
- n.  For sites that are implementing interventions across several schools in a district or CMO/EMO, remember that the interventions will likely differ across schools. Analyze the interventions used across your schools to determine commonalities and differences across interventions, which will help you differentiate your supports.

Related resources for selecting or modifying interventions based on data

General

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)



Introduction

- This brief provides guidance on how to review and select EBPs. The guidance includes where to look for EBPs, the types of questions you need to answer to select programs, and how to monitor the implementation of programs.

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for Schools Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module presents strategies and tools for identifying and selecting EBPs for school settings.

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

- [Using Data to Identify Programmatic Interventions](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar discusses strategies for connecting your data to interventions, including how to use school climate data to identify needs, how to identify types of programmatic interventions that can address these needs, and how to select programmatic interventions that can be implemented effectively within a school or district.

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCLS Users (Activity Set 3A)

- [The Importance of Contextual Fit When Implementing Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief provides information regarding the importance of contextual fit for intervention implementation. The brief includes core elements that you can use to determine whether there is contextual fit for interventions in your school(s) and guide practice and policy.

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

- [The Hexagon Tool—Exploring Context](#) (The National Implementation Research Network)
 - This research-based tool helps you identify contextual fit by exploring your school(s) or district context. The tool enables you to examine six factors relating to an intervention you are considering: need, fit, resources, evidence, readiness, and capacity.

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

Topic Specific

- [Bullying Prevention](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers practical strategies focused on how improved school climate reduces bullying and provides initial training in recognizing, responding to, and preventing bullying, as well as how to assess for risk of bullying.
- [Violence Prevention](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers practical direction on how to develop, manage, implement, and sustain a violence prevention strategy. Important to violence prevention is the interplay between positive school climate and strong relationships with and among students.
- [Substance Abuse Prevention](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar covers current effective practices for designing and managing a substance abuse prevention intervention that can be used to adjust current strategies and policies and improve school climate and student academic outcomes.
- [What Works Briefs](#) (California Safe and Supportive Schools)
 - This webpage includes a list of briefs addressing a variety of school climate topics that include suggested strategies districts, schools, and families can implement based on the latest research.

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

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[*MDS3 Resource Binder: Bullying Prevention*](#)
 - This resource includes information such as training materials, flyers, bullying pledges, sample activities, sample logos, sample forms, and tools for evaluating bullying programming.
- Maryland—[*MDS3 Resource Binder: Cognitive Behavioral intervention for Trauma in Schools \(CBITS\)*](#)
 - This resource includes materials such as overviews and frequently asked questions about CBITS, sample progress notes, sample forms (i.e., consent), a sample case summary, worksheets, sample letters for teachers and parents, and more.
- Iowa—[*Decisions in Motion: Iowa S3 Toolkits for Improving School Climate*](#), Step 3: Selecting Our Strategy
 - These toolkits are designed for schools that want to get moving right away to improve school climate. They cover a range of topics—from discipline to improving relationships—and can help schools and districts use data to develop a plan and create clear expectations. Each toolkit provides a sample plan and a step-by-step process of creating that plan to support your efforts to improve the climate in your school.
- Iowa—[*S3 Strategy Guide: Quality Rubric*](#)
 - This guide provides direction on how to use a rubric to score the degree of quality of your programs and strategies.
- [*California—Programs and Strategies*](#) (S3)
 - This chart displays the multitude of programmatic interventions and other resources used by California S3 schools.
- [*Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools*](#) (National Charter School Resource Center [NCSRC])
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.6: Participate in a thoughtful planning process for implementing the selected interventions

Purpose of thoughtful planning for implementing selected interventions

After you have identified those climate-related interventions that you want to implement in your school(s), engage key stakeholders in a thoughtful planning process. The planning process should ensure that staff members have the necessary time, resources, and professional development to implement the selected interventions. When you provide these types of supports, staff members know that school climate is a priority and take the implementation of the intervention more seriously. Furthermore, these supports provide staff the development of the skills needed to effectively implement the intervention(s) with fidelity. Along with collaborating with key stakeholders, collaborate with the intervention developers and with other districts or schools implementing the

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)



same interventions. Engage with these collaborators about the necessary logistics and supports to implement the interventions.

Furthermore, your school-level climate team (developed through *Objective 2.1.3: Develop school-level climate team[s]*) is essential to successful program implementation because it is responsible for oversight of the intervention. The team should meet on a regular basis to address implementation challenges and concerns. These meetings should include the development of agendas and follow-up activities that define action steps to ensure continued progress toward successful implementation.

Strategies for thoughtful planning for implementing selected interventions

- a. Plan for time, space, equipment, technology, and materials to roll out the climate-related intervention(s) effectively during a sustained period.
- b. Train *all* staff (not just teachers) on the intervention(s) and develop a sustainability plan to train staff hired later. Embed training materials in staff orientation packets. (See *Objective 1.2.4: Include relevant school climate and student support materials in orientation packets.*)
- c. Diversify training plan for those who have expertise versus those who are new to the intervention(s) selected.
- d. In the early stages of implementation, have coaches meet regularly and frequently with school leadership and other stakeholders involved in implementation. Ensure adequate time and support for these meetings to occur.
- e.  Develop professional learning communities for those schools with similar needs and identified interventions.

4.1.6 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Resource lists developed, materials procured, curriculum purchased, and training schedules and detailed timelines developed and approved
- Implementation plan
- Plan for training of trainers and staff, as needed
- Plan for refresher or supplemental training
- New staff training planned to account for turnover
- Schedule for school climate core planning team to meet individually or in small groups with various staff (e.g., principals) or staff or cohorts (e.g., teaching staff or support staff) to discuss their roles and plan



Communities of practice for coaches and schools

Related resources for thoughtful planning for implementing selected interventions

General

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 4](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support the selection and implementation of interventions.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- [Integrating Evidence-Based Practices \(EBPs\) Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Ensuring Fidelity of EBPs](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar focused on integrating EBPs within a multi-tiered system of supports, collecting data and information to understand if EBPs are being implemented as intended, and using that information to inform future practice.
- [Safe, Supportive, and Successful Schools Step by Step](#) (American Institutes for Research)
 - This guide provides easy-to-follow steps for educators wanting to know more about how to implement a three-tiered approach to student support. Strategies presented address social, ethical, and emotional change for all students; early interventions for some students that exhibit minor behavioral issues; and intensive interventions for the few students in the school who have significant emotional or behavioral issues.
- [Management Factors for Successful Program Implementation](#) (California Safe and Supportive Schools)
 - This guide presents factors that influence program success, including day-to-day management, administrative level support, training/professional development, and the at-risk student referral system.
- [Effective Planning Strategies for Program Implementation](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar addresses the components of an effective program implementation. Specifically, it discusses what data, policies, and systems you need for successful implementation and sustainability and how to adjust current or develop new policies and systems to support the effort.
- [Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module provides strategies and tools for getting ready to implement evidence-based programs in schools.

Topic Specific

- [Establishing Supportive Relationships Between Teachers, Staff, Students, and Families](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents ways to build a foundation of strong relationships among everyone in school to minimize conflict, improve conflict management, bolster students' developmental strengths, and improve school climate.
- [Addressing Risk Behavior Through Positive Youth Development Strategies](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar presents strength and evidence-based strategies to support positive development of students at various developmental stages that can be incorporated into the school day and reduce risk-taking behaviors.

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)



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)

- [*The School Discipline Consensus Report: Strategies From the Field to Keep Students Engaged in School and Out of the Juvenile Justice System*](#) (The Council of State Governments Justice Center)
 - This report presents data and research based on real-world, multidisciplinary strategies to reduce discipline practices that take students out of school and improve safe, supportive environments in schools.
- [*Active Implementation*](#) (National Implementation Research Network Webpage)
 - This webpage provides information on how to actively implement programs with planning steps, stages, and quality measurement. Resources on the page include articles, modules, webinars, and research.
- [*Stages of Implementation Analysis: Where Are We?*](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This implementation and planning tool helps you assess, plan, and track implementation activities to improve the success and fidelity of your school's or district's selected EBPs.
- [*ImpleMap: Exploring the Implementation Landscape*](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This planning tool facilitates the evaluation of your school's or district's capacity to actively implement programs and helps you clarify what you want to achieve with your intervention and identify which EBPs to use, who will support implementation and how to select and train those individuals, and how you will make the intervention happen.
- [*The Importance of Quality Implementation for Research, Practice, and Policy*](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief presents the core components, specific steps, and supports necessary to achieve quality implementation of EBPs.

Related resources from the field

- Wisconsin—[*S3 Action Plan*](#)
 - This sample action plan from Wisconsin includes is a template to enter findings from a needs assessment, measurable objectives based on those findings, and specific strategies and respective action steps to address those objectives. In addition, the plan includes who will lead each strategy, collaborative partners, how to monitor each strategy, and which data leaders need to monitor it.
- [*Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools*](#) (NCSRC)
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.7: Implement interventions, ensuring fidelity of implementation or appropriate adaptation

Purpose of implementing interventions with fidelity or appropriate adaptation

After you have selected your school climate interventions and developed your implementation plan, it is time to implement your intervention(s). From the start, take steps to ensure that your staff implements the interventions with fidelity. For example, you can provide feedback loops for your staff members to verify that they are implementing the core components of interventions as designed. Similarly, you might check in with your staff to determine if they are receiving the necessary training and support to effectively deliver classroom-based instruction on resolving conflicts peacefully. If staff members report concerns about fidelity criteria that do not seem to fit your school environment, be prepared to discuss adaptations to the intervention. Because staff members will vary in their ability to implement interventions across multiple tiers, the training and support they need also will vary. By differentiating your supports to various staff, you will maximize the effectiveness of the intervention and eliminate barriers to implementation.

Strategies for implementing interventions with fidelity or appropriate adaptation

- a. Continually provide coaching, monitoring, and communities of practice to ensure progress.
- b. Consult with developers to determine levels of support and tools needed to assess fidelity of implementation.
- c. Use tools to monitor implementation across stakeholders (e.g., How are staff and students responding to the intervention?).
- d. As appropriate, involve students, families, and other community stakeholders in implementation plan.
- e. Provide educators, families, and community members with support and feedback as they implement interventions (e.g., through observations, feedback loops, peer mentoring, and coaching).
- f. Provide educators with job-embedded professional learning and ensure they have access to ongoing professional development and support (e.g., educators participate in school climate professional learning communities and have access to coaching).
- g. Provide time during staff meetings for staff to bring up their school climate concerns.

4.1.7 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Tools to assess fidelity of implementation
- Initial trainings and booster or refresher trainings
- Observations and performance feedback sessions between staff and school climate coaches, including attention to issues that may call for adaptations to interventions
- School-based implementation meetings and staff meetings focused on school climate improvements
- Selected intervention(s) as a core element of the daily school routine
- Students/staff/families learn and demonstrate new skills associated with engagement, safety, or environment issues

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)



- h.  Build a component for monitoring fidelity into the initial request for proposal for participating schools and ask how they would continuously monitor for improvement or adapt specific interventions to better fit their school environment.

Related resources for implementing interventions with fidelity or appropriate adaptation

- [School Climate Improvement Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions](#) (NCSSLE)
 - This online module provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.
- [Integrating Evidence-Based Practices \(EBPs\) Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports and Ensuring Fidelity of EBPs](#) (NCSSLE Webinar)
 - This webinar is focused on integrating EBPs within a multi-tiered system of supports, collecting data and information to understand if EBPs are being implemented as intended, and using that information to inform future practice.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Practices](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This brief provides a framework for identifying key pieces of information you should know to select EBPs. It includes information on identifying EBPs, determining readiness to implement, tracking outcomes, and monitoring fidelity. In the appendix, key questions are summarized in a discussion guide, along with worksheets and resources to help you select an EBP that meets your needs.
- [Evidence-Based Module Series](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This self-paced learning module series provides guidance on selecting, preparing for, and implementing EBPs in school settings.
 - [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs for Schools Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module presents strategies and tools for identifying and selecting EBPs for school settings.
 - [Preparing to Implement Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This module provides strategies and tools for getting ready to implement EBPs in schools.
 - [Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This interactive, self-paced learning module presents strategies and tools for implementing, evaluating, supporting, and sustaining EBPs in schools.
- [Laying the Foundation: A Discussion on Moving Fidelity of Implementation From Compliance to Capacity Building](#) (NCSSLE, S3 Training)
 - This presentation overviews the definition of fidelity, the challenges of maintaining implementation fidelity, and the strategies to overcome those challenges.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- [Program Fidelity and Adaptation: Meeting Local Needs Without Compromising Program Effectiveness](#) (What Works, Wisconsin—Research to Practice Series)
 - This practice brief covers strategies for maintaining fidelity during program adaptation and adapting programs to your school’s needs.
- [Monitoring Fidelity of Implementation](#) (Center on Innovation and Improvement)
 - This handbook outlines research-based action principals behind implementation of interventions with fidelity.
- [Fidelity Monitoring Tip Sheet](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau)
 - This tip sheet developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, contains useful information about what an EBP is and why monitoring the fidelity of it is important.
- [Making Adaptations Tip Sheet](#) (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau)
 - This tip sheet developed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Family and Youth Services Bureau, contains useful information about how to decide when to make adaptations to certain EBPs, as well as how to plan and implement the adaptation.
- [More Than Just a Check Box: Bring Meaning to Your Use of Fidelity Observation Tools](#) (EPISCenter)
 - This guide by the EPISCenter provides strategies for helping staff understand the importance of tools to monitor fidelity to programs.
- [Charter School Discipline: Examples of Policies and School Climate Efforts From the Field](#) (NCSRC)
 - The report profiles four charter schools with innovative approaches to discipline: Health Sciences High and Middle College, KIPP Bay Area Schools, New Orleans College Prep Network, and Rowe Elementary School. The report presents each school’s culture, discipline programs, results, and emerging issues.
- [White Paper: An Honest Approach to Discipline](#) (DC Public Charter School Board [DCPCSB])
 - This white paper examines DCPCSB’s approach to supporting decreased out-of-school suspension rates and highlights strategies put in place by three DC public charter school networks—Center City Public Charter School, Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy, and Friendship Public Charter School.

Related resources from the field

- Arizona—[Innovation Spotlights: Addressing Fidelity of Implementation in Arizona](#) (S3)
 - This brief discusses the guiding principles of the Arizona Safe and Supportive Schools (S3) initiative, which provides services and programming to 26 high schools in 14 districts aimed at creating and maintaining safe and supportive learning environments. A core part of the initiative involves using data to implement appropriate programming and measuring the fidelity of implemented programs.



- Louisiana—*Innovation Spotlights: Addressing Fidelity of Implementation in Louisiana* (S3)
 - This brief shares information about Louisiana’s Positive Approaches for Safe and Supportive Schools program, which offers a foundation to implement integrated and comprehensive prevention programs in 43 high schools across the state. The team developed a fidelity checklist through a Web-based platform that teachers and other staff who are implementing the interventions and curriculum using a multi-tiered approach could easily complete.

OBJECTIVE 4.1.8: Use data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of interventions

Purpose of using data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of interventions

Along with using data to assess your school climate needs, you can use data to monitor the fidelity of implementation or how well the climate-related interventions are being implemented. You also can use the fidelity data to identify successes and challenges with implementation, including documenting which core components of the intervention are being implemented consistently, the use of materials, and the success of training and support. Furthermore, fidelity data help you improve your school climate interventions by identifying those staff members who need increased support with tiered approaches. Finally, use the data to determine how implementation fidelity relates to student outcomes.

Strategies for using data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of interventions

- a. If available, use the fidelity tool/checklist prepared by the developer. Determine if adaptations need to be made to these fidelity tools for your school community. If a developer’s fidelity tool/checklist is not available, design your own tool/checklist.
- b. Refine and target support strategies identified earlier through *Objective 4.1.7: Implement interventions, ensuring fidelity of implementation or appropriate adaption* based on fidelity data.
- c. Institute regular meetings with the school-level climate team and key stakeholders to discuss implementation and fidelity data.
- d. Determine if further adaptations need to be made to interventions based on the fidelity data.

4.1.8 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Fidelity tool/checklist from developer or create your own
- Data that summarize fidelity of implementation
- Document that identifies the differentiated supports for staff to implement in a multi-tiered system of supports
- Regularly scheduled meetings of coaches and staff to discuss implementation, fidelity, and potential adaptations

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)



Related resources for using data to monitor the fidelity of implementation of interventions

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 5](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support the monitoring and evaluation of school climate improvements.
- [Laying the Foundation: A Discussion on Moving Fidelity of Implementation From Compliance to Capacity Building](#) (NCSSLE, S3 Training)
 - This presentation provides an overview of the definition of fidelity, the challenges of maintaining implementation fidelity, and the strategies to overcome those challenges.
- [Fidelity Observation Tools](#) (EPISCenter)
 - This webpage includes tools to support implementation fidelity, generally and specifically, for a selection of programs commonly implemented to address school climate.
- [Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This interactive, self-paced learning module presents strategies and tools for implementing, evaluating, supporting, and sustaining EBPs in schools.

Related resources from the field

- [Fidelity Guidelines and Checklists](#) (California Healthy Kids Resource Center)
 - This webpage provides guidelines and checklists to assess the fidelity of a selection of programs commonly implemented to address school climate.
- [Innovation Spotlights on Implementing With Fidelity](#) (S3)
 - These short briefs describe how two states, Arizona and Louisiana, supported schools in implementing EBPs with fidelity.

OBJECTIVE 4.1:9: Continue school climate messaging to districts/CMOs/EMO and schools at different levels of implementation

Purpose of continuing messaging to districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools at different levels of implementation

Throughout the implementation process, continue stakeholder communications about the progress made on school climate improvements. This messaging can include your fidelity data, which will inform your stakeholders on the progress made to date, as well as where you could use additional support. Modifying your message based on your audience's level of implementation is important (e.g., schools just starting to train staff will need different supports than staff who have been implementing the intervention[s] across multiple years). Continuing your communications to all stakeholders is critical to maintaining buy-in to the process, as well as promoting the sustainability of your school climate efforts.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



Strategies for continuing messaging to districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools at different levels of implementation

- a. Engage key stakeholders in districts and schools throughout the intervention selection, planning, and implementation process.
- b. Using the communication strategies you developed through *Objective 2.1.1: Develop messaging to schools on school climate improvement efforts*, continue your messaging efforts during the implementation process.
- c. Hold regular stakeholder meetings to disseminate fidelity data; see how they align with school climate data (e.g., If school climate data have not moved in a positive direction, is this caused, at least in part, by poor fidelity of implementation?).
- d.  Modify your message based on the level of implementation in your schools (e.g., messaging for schools just starting to train staff versus those partially implementing versus those who have fully implemented an intervention).

4.1.9 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Communication documents sent to district or school stakeholders with messaging targeted to their level of implementation
- Regularly scheduled meetings that summarize the most recent school climate data and fidelity data

Related resources for continuing messaging to districts/CMOs/EMOs and schools at different levels of implementation

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guides, Section 5](#) (NCSSLE)
 - Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support the monitoring and evaluation of school climate improvements.
- [The Importance of Quality Implementation for Research, Practice, and Policy](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief presents the core components, specific steps, and supports necessary to achieve quality implementation of EBPs.

Evaluate and Refine the Choice of Interventions and Implementation Strategies and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability (ACTIVITY SET 4, ACTION STEP 2 [4.2])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practices. At the end of Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions, it will be useful to evaluate the implementation of your chosen school climate interventions and the support you provide to educators to implement those interventions. Evaluating your efforts in choosing and implementing interventions will help you not only get better with each cycle of implementation but also sustain the structures and processes you are creating. It is important for you to constantly reflect on your implementation efforts to determine what is

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data, EDSCS Users (Activity Set 3A)

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



working well, what is not working well, why this may be the case, and how to improve. Although much of this work is embedded throughout this activity set, it is important to stop periodically and take stock of how the intervention(s) are being implemented and how multiple school climate interventions are working in concert with one another, and with other initiatives, to support a positive school climate.

OBJECTIVE 4.2.1: Plan how to assess implementation with fidelity across time (e.g., during a five-year period)

Purpose of planning how to assess implementation with fidelity across time

Throughout this activity set, the objectives contained strategies to monitor the fidelity of implementation of your chosen school climate interventions. Although assessing fidelity is particularly important when you first implement the intervention, monitoring the implementation across time supports sustainability and ensures the interventions have their intended effect. Implementing new interventions is expensive and difficult, so you also may want to spend the time and resources planning for and implementing strategies to support institutionalization of the intervention. As your needs change, also expect that how the intervention is implemented will change too; thus, it is important to document and report on how implementation evolves. Determine cost-effective ways to continuously monitor implementation, such as combining implementation monitoring with other initiatives (e.g., educator effectiveness).

Strategies for planning how to assess implementation with fidelity

- a. Determine a set of core outcomes and core components of the program that you can assess with fidelity across time.
- b. Establish biannual markers to assess sustainability; if that is not possible, establish markers at least annually.
- c. Determine cost-effective structures that can be used to monitor fidelity. For example, embedding school climate metrics within your school improvement plans or data that you collect for accountability systems.
- d. When selecting variables to incorporate in your sustainability plan, you can apply *Fixsen's model*, which recommends assessing whether you are (1) implementing tasks brilliantly, (2) making everyone more effective than they would ordinarily be, and (3) providing feedback so you can implement effectively.

4.2.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Sustainability plan that outlines the metrics used to assess implementation

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)



Related resources for planning how to assess implementation with fidelity

- [Using Evidence-Based Constructs to Assess Extent of Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This brief provides constructs on how to manage your implementation of interventions. By applying the constructs within this brief, you create a plan for monitoring your implementation using data and comparing your intervention to the brief’s suggested time frame for each component of implementation.
- [Implementation Research: A Synthesis of the Literature](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This research paper synthesizes literature on implementation to create a framework for implementation that includes clear stages with suggested timelines, a focus on readiness for change, and an eye toward sustainability and fidelity in implementation.
- [Core Intervention Components: Identifying and Operationalizing What Makes Programs Work](#) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services)
 - This research brief contains information that will help you better understand what “core components” are and how to identify, operationalize, and implement them.
- [Core Implementation Components](#) (National Implementation Research Network)
 - This research article contains a summary of findings from recent reviews of implementation literature and effective practices. In addition, the article provides two frameworks that describe ways to conceptualize implementation stages and core implementation components.
- [Selecting Evidence-Based Programs](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - The brief provides guidance on how to review and select EBPs. This guidance includes where to look for EBPs, the types of questions you need to answer to select programs, and how to monitor the implementation of programs.
- [Implementing Evidence-Based Programs in School Settings Module](#) (National Resource Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention)
 - This interactive, self-paced learning module presents strategies and tools for implementing, evaluating, supporting, and sustaining EBPs in schools.

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)



District or State Example of Implementing Programmatic Interventions Activity Set

Kansas

The Kansas S3 Initiative first identified 10 priority areas for schools to focus on in its school climate improvement efforts. These included academic achievement/school attendance, substance abuse prevention and intervention, bullying/violence prevention/conflict resolution, truancy/dropout prevention, and mental health/emotional support, to name a few.

Kansas then prepared a list of EBPs available for implementation and the level of intervention for each, as aligned with the multi-tiered system of supports model, mapped onto its priority areas. This approach allowed for a broad focus, knowing that not all local education agencies would identify the same climate needs, and ensured as much as possible that they were choosing strategies that were proven effective.

Kansas S3 used survey data collected each spring and its most recent administrative data to inform schools' selection and implementation of interventions and approaches. Schools were required to develop action plans and implement strategies that impacted all students in the school (universal), as well as students who were either at risk (selected) or students who were at high risk (indicated). For more information, see <http://www.kansasmtss.org/>.

To ensure that interventions were in fact meeting the needs demonstrated by the data, Kansas S3 provided ongoing (at least quarterly) technical assistance regarding program implementation, helped school teams complete fidelity-of-implementation checklists, and monitored schools' progress toward fulfilling their action plans and goals.

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)



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

The previous four activity sets to improve school climate provide objectives and strategies to continuously monitor and evaluate your progress on your efforts—what is going well and what needs to be modified. Activity Set 5: Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements presents objectives and strategies specific to evaluating your efforts after you complete almost an entire cycle of school climate improvements (one cycle is approximately one year).



This activity set is composed of two action steps: (1) evaluate the school climate improvement process and (2) evaluate and refine the overall effort and continue planning for improvement and sustainability from a multi-tiered perspective. The strategies within this activity set help you determine the impact that your planning, stakeholder engagement, data collection and analysis, and intervention implementation has had on your schools' climate and student outcomes. The evaluation results help inform the next cycle of school climate improvements by helping you understand how well your chosen climate-related interventions were implemented, as well as the impact of those interventions on your expected outcomes. Evaluation results can guide you to determine whether interventions should be continued, modified, or adapted in the next cycle of school climate improvements, as well as if you need to continue or modify the infrastructure you developed to sustain your efforts.

Through *Objective 1.3.2: Develop a logic model and indicators (or “theory of action”)*, you developed your logic model or theory of action, which described the interventions, actions, and strategies (i.e., processes) you planned to implement that ultimately would lead to your desired result (i.e., outcomes). When conducting an evaluation of your efforts, it is important to evaluate the processes, as well as the outcomes. Evaluating the processes helps you understand what changes you actually made to improve your school climate, whereas the evaluation of outcomes helps you understand whether those changes led to your desired results.

ACTION STEP 1. Evaluate the School Climate Improvement Process

- [OBJECTIVE 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate effort](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 5.1.2: Conduct a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate process](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 5.1.3: Conduct an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations](#)
- [OBJECTIVE 5.1.4: Prepare an annual end-of-year process and outcome report](#)

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



ACTION STEP 2. Evaluate and Refine the Overall Effort and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability From a Multi-Tiered Perspective

- **OBJECTIVE 5.2.1: Strengthen school climate effort characteristics and sustain infrastructure**

District or State Example of Evaluating Initiative Component

Evaluate the School Climate Improvement Process (ACTIVITY SET 5, ACTION STEP 1 [5.1])

The four objectives within this action set provide strategies you can use to evaluate the overall effort, including evaluating the processes you implemented and expected outcomes. Also included are strategies that can help you prepare an annual end-of-year report that is digestible to various stakeholders. The end-of-year report should provide enough information to help guide you through your school climate improvements moving forward. These evaluations help you examine whether the changes you implemented occurred in an equitable way across stakeholder groups (e.g., students, families, and staff) and by stakeholder characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity or English learner), as well as whether the school climate efforts produced similar effects for each of these groups.

OBJECTIVE 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate effort

Purpose of developing a plan to evaluate the overall school climate efforts

Prior to conducting any evaluation, it is important to plan your evaluation efforts to determine what data you have and what data you need to collect. The evaluation should be guided by your theory of action that describes what you planned to do to, the anticipated outcomes, and the evaluation plan to evaluate your efforts developed during Activity Set 1: Planning for School Climate Improvements. You collected much of the data (but not all) that you will use in your evaluation during Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data and Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions.

Your evaluation has three important parts: evaluating the processes, evaluating the outcomes, and using the evaluation results for continuous improvement. The process evaluation assesses the various elements of your school climate improvements, including how well you implemented the interventions and how well you involved stakeholders in the process. To conduct the process evaluation, you can use the data collected through *Objective 4.1.8: Use data to monitor fidelity of implementation of interventions*. Review the types of questions you want answered by your process evaluation to determine the data you will use.

Second, outcome evaluation assesses the effects of your school climate efforts. That is, did the changes you made in your school(s) have an impact on your anticipated outcome(s)? To conduct the outcome evaluation, you can use the data collected through Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data. However, depending on when you collected data, you may want to

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)**



collect additional data to determine the effects. Review the questions you want answered by the outcomes evaluation to determine if your current data address them or if you will need to collect additional data.

Third, you can use the process and outcomes evaluations to inform a cycle of continuous improvement, beginning with your next cycle of implementation. The process evaluation will help you determine which interventions and policies were implemented successfully and which ones need to be modified, adapted, removed, or added. The outcomes evaluation helps you determine the progress that you have made and determine if there are particular stakeholders (stakeholders with specific characteristics) who are benefiting more or less than others.

Strategies for developing a plan to evaluate the overall school climate efforts

- a. Review the plan you developed during Activity Set 1 on how you evaluate your overall school climate effort, including process data (data that assess how well you implement interventions and strategies of your school climate efforts) and outcome data (data that assess the final result of your efforts; e.g., through survey data, behavioral incidents, attendance, and student social and emotional skills).
- b. Prior to conducting your evaluation, allow sufficient time for intervention(s) to take root and achieve fidelity. This time will vary depending on the intervention, how well it is matched to identified needs, and how well it is implemented. For some interventions, you may not see measurable effects within the first few years of implementation. (See implementation materials from developers of specific interventions you are using as well as Activity Set 4: Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions for details on tools to measure fidelity.)
- c. Secure an external evaluator to evaluate the overall school climate efforts (use strategies in *Objective 1.3.9: Develop contracts and find partners [e.g., local universities]* to help you find an external evaluator). Consider using informal feedback in the evaluation but base final decisions on high-quality empirical evidence rather than anecdotal evidence.
- d. Integrate an implementation monitoring method into your ongoing process evaluation to sustain efforts (use strategies in *Objective 4.1.8: Use data to monitor fidelity of implementation of interventions*). Include this information as part of the development of your data infrastructure.
- e. Establish and maintain ongoing outcomes evaluation (use strategies in Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data). This should be part of the development of your data infrastructure.

5.1.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Data collection plan to support continuous improvement processes
- Dissemination and communication plan of the evaluation report(s), which includes timeline and describes what information needs to be presented to whom and how to present it
- Infrastructure to sustain evaluation efforts

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

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

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

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

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



- f. Collect qualitative data (e.g., focus groups and interviews) systematically and with rigor (i.e., rather than simply “anecdotal data”). (See Objective 3.1.6a: *Conduct focus groups and interviews with students, staff, or families* to help you determine strategies to collect high-quality qualitative data.)
- g. Develop a dissemination plan to communicate the evaluation results to stakeholders. Dissemination plans can include the stated goals and outcomes of the efforts and whether and how they have been achieved to date. (See Activity Set 3, Action Step 3: *Disseminate Findings*.)

Related resources for developing a plan to evaluate the overall school climate efforts

- [Program Evaluation Resources](#) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
 - This evaluation resources list helps you evaluate the success of your interventions. Resources such as manuals, trainings, websites, and professional organizations are listed on this website to assist you with evaluating your interventions.
- [School Climate and Assessment](#) (National School Climate Center)
 - This brief contains the essential factors to consider when determining the assessment tool to measure school climate and strategies to guide effective practice, including whether the selected tool makes it possible to customize aspects of the tool to measure particular subgroups that are significant to the school community.

OBJECTIVE 5.1.2: Conduct a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate process

Purpose of conducting a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate efforts

Objective 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate efforts included strategies to help you develop a plan to conduct your process evaluation. The goal of a process evaluation is to determine the degree to which you actually implemented the interventions. *Objective 4.1.8: Use data to monitor fidelity of implementation of interventions* provided strategies on how to assess intervention processes, including implementation fidelity. The strategies used for Objective 4.1.8 also can be used during the process evaluation. Components of the process evaluation can include whether you used your resources appropriately, the degree to which stakeholders were engaged and how they were engaged, and if educators received sufficient resources and support to implement intervention(s) with fidelity.



Strategies for conducting a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate efforts

- a. Use tools provided by the developer of the intervention to assess implementation fidelity, if available.
- b. Collect additional data to monitor fidelity, if needed.
- c. Conduct focus groups or interviews to obtain a more nuanced understanding about stakeholder perceptions of the school climate efforts, particularly to understand different experiences of stakeholders with various characteristics.
- d. Collect process data (qualitative data) on the implementation of procedures such as those used for school climate survey data collection, data analyses, reporting and dissemination, and stakeholder engagement, as well as the actual implementation of interventions and corresponding professional development and coaching activities.
- e. Continuously collect data before and after interventions to help adjust interventions and identify the need for new ones and allow you to assess the depth of support for and understanding of how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments.
- f. Analyze the data collected to evaluate your processes. Data analysis procedures will depend on the type of data you collect. Consult with either the program designer or your external consultant on how to analyze the data.
- g. Decide on unit of analysis—state, region, county, district, CMO/EMO, or school.

5.1.2 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Measures of effectiveness of each activity set of the school climate efforts, as well as the specific interventions implemented; these measures should be aligned with your theory of action
- Completed process evaluation, with appropriate data to write up for Objective 5.1.4: *Prepare an annual end-of-year process and outcomes report*
- Annual or semiannual meetings for review conducted by school-level climate team and appropriate stakeholders

Related resources for conducting a process evaluation to review the effectiveness of various elements of the school climate efforts

- [*Providing Feedback to Improve the Initiative*](#) from the Community Tool Box (Work Group for Community Health and Development)
 - This toolbox provides theory and methodology behind getting feedback and how to use it to improve initiatives.

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)



- [*Five Steps for Structuring Data-Informed Conversations and Action in Education*](#) (Institute of Education Sciences)
 - This five-step facilitation guide helps you use collected data to support decision making and strategic action. The five steps cover what to do before, during, and after data collection; provide guiding questions and activities, and help you use the data to shape conversation about next steps in implementation.
- [*Youth-Adult Partnerships: Are You There Yet? How to Evaluate Your Youth Development Program*](#) (Youth.gov)
 - This assessment tool allows you to determine how well you are engaging students in a youth development–oriented program, such as a youth school climate team, a youth advisory council, or other youth and adult partnered settings.

Related resources from the field

- Maryland—[*MDS3 School Visit Log*](#)
 - This visit log provides a framework for tracking school visits by specialists such as when they visited, who they visited, and what services they provided and toward what program or strategy. This information will later allow you to determine where the most energy and resources were put and compare it with the amount of success of the various programs so that you can make changes for the future.
- Maryland—[*Systems Coaching*](#)
 - These excerpts provide an example of what data to collect and how to use the data when looking at how much time was spent with coaching and with whom.

OBJECTIVE 5.1.3: Conduct an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations

Purpose of conducting an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations

In *Objective 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate initiative*, you developed a plan to conduct your outcome evaluation. The goal of your outcome evaluation is to determine the impact your school climate improvements have had on your intended outcomes. In addition, the outcome evaluation allows you to continue to collect leading indicators (measures that can show whether you are moving in the right direction) that should be collected from the start of the efforts. As you collect and analyze your outcome evaluation and leading indicators, carefully review the data collected to determine the impact of the school climate improvement practices. This review helps you determine if your efforts were effective, particularly if you were successful in improving climate and youth outcomes for all students. In other words, analysis may reveal if you provided tiered supports and produced the anticipated outcomes. In addition, analyzing the effects of your efforts can help determine if you need to modify your current climate efforts for all stakeholders or potentially a subset of stakeholders if your data reveal different effects for different stakeholder groups. Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data provided strategies on how to collect outcome data. The strategies used for Activity Set 3 also can be used during the outcome evaluation.

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)



Strategies for conducting an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations

- a. Use the data gathered in Activity Set 3: Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data to inform your evaluation, overall and by respondent characteristics.
- b. Collect any additional data needed as identified through *Objective 5.1.1: Develop a plan to evaluate the overall school climate efforts.*
- c. Conduct focus groups and interviews to obtain a more nuanced understanding about stakeholder perceptions of school climate outcomes, particularly to understand differences by respondent characteristics.
- d. Continuously collect data before and after interventions to help adjust interventions, identify the need for new ones, and allow you to assess the depth of support for and understanding of how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments.
- e. Reassess your efforts to improve school climate for your students by respondent group based on the evaluation, recognizing that it may take more than a year to see effects.
- f. Continuously collect before and after interventions to help adjust interventions and identify the need for new ones.
- g. Analyze the data collected to evaluate your outcomes. Data analysis procedures will depend on the type of data you collected and the types of questions you want answered. Consult with either district research staff or external consultants on how to analyze the data.
- h. Decide on unit of analysis—state, district, CMO/EMO, or school.

5.1.3 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Measures of school climate outcomes
- Completed outcome evaluation, with appropriate data to write up during *Objective 5.1.4: Prepare an annual end-of-year process and outcomes report*
- Annual or semiannual meetings for review conducted by school-level climate team and appropriate stakeholders
- Individuals or committees to monitor outcomes across respondent characteristics

Related resources for conducting an outcomes evaluation to determine the global effects and those for subpopulations

- [*Conducting Focus Groups to Develop a Comprehensive School Portrait*](#) (National Institute for Urban School Improvement)
 - This tool describes what a focus group is, its purpose, how to create an effective one, and how to use the results from a focus group.

Related resources from the field

- California—[*Innovation Spotlights: Youth Engagement in California*](#) (National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments [NCSSLE])
 - This article contains information about one of the focus areas of the California S3 initiative, which was to promote youth development among participating high school students. In partnership with WestEd, the California Department of Education

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)

conducted “Listening to Students,” or student fishbowl circles, at each of the 58 S3 high schools in fall 2011, during which students and school staff engaged in meaningful dialogue about school climate data.

- [Case Study: Student Discipline and School Climate in Charter Schools](#) (National Charter School Resource Center [NCSRC])
 - This series of videos profiles four charter schools nominated by experts in their effort to make school climate and discipline improvements.

OBJECTIVE 5.1.4: Prepare an annual end-of-year process and outcome report

Purpose of preparing an annual end-of-year process and outcome report

After you conduct your process and outcome evaluations, you can prepare an end-of-year performance report to demonstrate whether progress has been made toward implementing activities to improve your school climate and toward meeting your outcomes. The end-of-year report also can help you monitor change across years after your school climate efforts have been implemented for multiple years. This report can be used for internal purposes; to disseminate to your stakeholders; or to demonstrate your effectiveness to the state, district, or funders (or potential funders). Depending on what you need the report for, you may not need to develop a full report, as long as you are able to share and discuss the key data results from the process and outcome evaluations. Conversely, you may want to have multiple reports based on your different data sources. It is important to reflect on why you are developing these reports, who they are targeted at, and how you will use them before you begin to write them.

Strategies for preparing an annual end-of-year process and outcome report

- a. Include background information (e.g., overarching school climate improvement efforts; theory of action; interventions examined and chosen to be implemented; implementation fidelity; and, for districts/CMOs/EMOs, the number of schools and how they were selected).
- b. Discuss the key indicators of progress and success based on your theory of action and on stakeholder input.
- c. Assess observed progress toward positive change in school climate and related outcomes.
- d. Incorporate results from the school climate surveys (overall and by respondent characteristics), as well as your process and outcome evaluation.
- e. Include an analysis of change across multiple years, if available.

5.1.4 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Progress reports prepared by (or for) each participating school
- Cross-school, district, CMO/EMO, or charter authorizer summary shared with all stakeholders

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)



- f. Include Government Performance and Results Act²⁴ measures in the annual report if required by the funding source.
- g. Include a summary of plans for sustainability of the initiative.
- h. Develop a summary report that summarizes process data in a way that allows stakeholders and the core planning team to make decisions about whether to continue, modify, or add interventions or practices to your school climate effort.
- i. Develop a summary report that summarizes outcome data in a way that allows stakeholders and the core planning team to determine whether the overall efforts are having their intended impact on students and the school climate as a whole and for subgroups.
- j. Conduct meetings that allow stakeholders to review the year-end report and provide input into the strategies that you will implement in the next cycle, using the process and outcome data.

Related resources for preparing an annual end-of-year process and outcome report

- [Communicating Information to Funders for Support and Accountability](#) from the Community Tool Box (Work Group for Community Health and Development)
 - This tool provides the reasoning behind sharing your data with key audiences as well as a checklist, supportive tools, and presentation slides to support your efforts to garner buy-in from funders.
- [“Getting to Outcomes: A Results-Based Approach to Accountability”](#) in *Evaluation and Program Planning* (Wandersman, Imm, Chinman, & Kaftarian; 2000)
 - Practitioners can use this evidence-based model to achieve their desired outcomes by using outcome assessment results as a form of creating accountability.

Evaluate and Refine the Overall Effort and Continue Planning for Improvement and Sustainability From a Multi-Tiered Perspective (ACTIVITY SET 5, ACTION STEP 2 [5.2])

At the end of each activity set, reflect on, assess, and refine your efforts with any eye toward institutionalizing good practice. At the end of Activity Set 5: Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements, it will be useful to review your evaluation efforts. It is important for you to reflect on the types of data that you are collecting and ensure that the data you collect help you and your stakeholders constantly improve and refine your efforts. In addition, as you complete your cycle of school climate improvements, it also is important to reflect on the overall structures and processes implemented to improve your school climate.

²⁴ The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) refers to a U.S. law enacted in 1993 (P.L. 103-62) that was designed to improve government project management. The GPRA requires agencies to engage in project management tasks such as setting goals, measuring results, and reporting their progress.

- 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)

OBJECTIVE 5.2.1: Strengthen school climate effort characteristics and sustain infrastructure

Purpose of strengthening school climate effort characteristics and sustaining infrastructure

Prior to starting each school climate cycle, it is important to reflect on what you have done and strengthen those characteristics that have worked well. This step will help you institutionalize and routinize the school climate efforts that are working well and strengthen those programs or practices that need further attention. By taking the time to review the infrastructure developed throughout the process, you ensure that the basic organizational structures, policies, and staff needed for the effort are in place and functioning and that the effort thrives independent of the individuals currently overseeing it. Many of these strategies should be continued when you begin again with the next cycle (Activity Set 1).

Strategies for strengthening school climate effort characteristics and sustaining infrastructure

- a. Ensure that you align the effort with the needs of the district or school.
- b. Confirm the compatibility of the effort with current state educational agency goals and priorities.
- c. Build and maintain relationships among key stakeholders and ensure stakeholder ownership.
- d. Review and augment administrative and fiscal structures and formal inter- and intraorganizational relationships developed throughout the effort.
- e. Confirm resources or identify new ones to sustain and strengthen the effort, including funding; human, physical, technological, and information sources; staff and volunteers; training capability; and marketing and communications resources.
- f. Review administrative policies and procedures that support the effort and determine if they need to be revised in areas such as conducting needs assessments, implementing evidence-based programs (EBPs), and monitoring and evaluating program performance.
- g. Incorporate staff training, technical assistance, and continuing education into ongoing operations.
- h. Integrate the initiative into manuals, procedures, trainings, and regulations.

5.2.1 EXAMPLE OUTPUTS AND PRODUCTS

- Sustainability action plan for effective programs, activities, or other successful aspects of the initiative
- Agreements with partners
- Document summarizing rationale and priority activities needed to achieve sustainability of the initiative
- Experts' lists to turn to for technical assistance and consultation across a range of activities
- Updated job descriptions, manuals, procedures, and regulations
- Protocols for ongoing professional development related to school climate for all school personnel
- Calendar of budget cycles and proposal deadlines

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)



- i. Consult with experts to review efforts to date and provide recommendations to continue efforts.
- j. Ensure survival of the effort through annual budget and grant cycles.

Related resources for strengthening effort characteristics and sustaining infrastructure

- [2012 Grantee TA Symposium: Merging School Climate in Pursuit of Academic Excellence](#) (NCSSLE, S3 Training)—see presentations and resources listed under “Sustainability” and “Sustaining Innovations.”
 - These presentations and worksheets provide strategies on how to sustain school climate and culture improvement and how to incorporate changes into long-term organization and fiscal plans.
- Sustainability Materials From NCSSLE S3 TA Training, September 17–18, 2013:
 - [State Work Teams Process](#)
 - This resource provides information to help you break down the process of sustainability into obtainable goals and provides a roadmap for prioritizing and creating a sustainable positive school climate.
 - [State Sustainability Assessment Tool](#)
 - This resource is a blank template that complements the State Work Teams Process. It is as an example and model for organizing your own state sustainability assessment.
 - [Annotated State Sustainability Tool](#)
 - This resource is an annotated version of the State Sustainability Assessment Tool template to assist you with completing the blank version.
 - [Local Sustainability Assessment Tool](#)
 - This assessment, similar to the State Sustainability Assessment Tool, will help you identify your strengths and needs at the local level.
 - [Annotated Local Sustainability Assessment Tool](#)
 - This resource is an annotated version of the Local Sustainability Assessment Tool template to assist you with completing the blank version.

District or State Example of Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvements Activity Set

Maryland

The MDS3 Initiative sought to better understand the impact of schoolwide prevention efforts in high schools, and factors influencing program implementation fidelity and the outcomes of those programs. Specifically, MDS3 evaluated the integration of the universal, schoolwide positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) model with other evidence-based selective and indicated prevention programs (i.e., EBPs) with 52 high schools.

- 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)

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)

Maryland’s evaluation met the gold standard for research design—a randomized controlled trial. The 31 schools that received supports (i.e., EBPs) to improve school climate were selected randomly and were statistically no different from the comparison schools that did not receive the intervention. The intervention schools received training, coaching, and the necessary resources to implement a continuum of EBPs and evidence-based practices, and integrate them with PBIS. The 27 comparison high schools received no interventions and were monitored using the same MDS3 school climate measures collected for the intervention schools (i.e., referrals, suspensions, attendance, and academic records furnished through the [Maryland Report Card](#) and the [MDS3 Survey System Reporting Model](#) plus data from the MDS3 School Climate Survey from students, parents, and staff).

Roll out of the core features of PBIS was measured by a set of research-based implementation tools administered by outside observers: the Implementation Phases Inventory, the School-wide Evaluation Tool, and the Individual Student Systems Evaluation Tool. The research team also explored whether baseline rates of bullying and other school-level indicators of disorder were affected by the adoption of the multi-tiered PBIS framework.

Analyses showed that schools with higher initial rates of bullying generally implemented PBIS with greater fidelity. These analyses suggest that schools with increased bullying may be particularly motivated to adopt PBIS. However, other baseline indicators of school disorder were generally not associated with PBIS implementation, and thus do not appear to be barriers to adoption.

For more information, see the following articles:

- Bradshaw, C. P., Pas, E. T., Debnam, K. J., & Lindstrom Johnson, S. (2015). A focus on implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in high schools: Associations with bullying and other indicators of school disorder. *School Psychology Review, 44*(4), 480–498.
- Bradshaw, C. P., Waasdorp, T. E., Debnam, K. J., & Lindstrom Johnson, S. (2014). Measuring school climate: A focus on safety, engagement, and the environment. *Journal of School Health, 84*, 593–604.

Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) planned from the beginning of its school climate initiative to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of strategies to reduce high suspension rates and improve the school climate in 55 high schools.

Wisconsin’s evaluation used data from annual online surveys of high school students, as well as school-level data on suspensions, behavioral incidents, and the fidelity of program implementation. Student surveys included measures of perceived school climate; experience of violence, bullying, and harassment; personal alcohol and drug use; commitment to school work; perceived safety; and perceived school rules enforcement. Implementation data came from school consultants and annual school reports. Data on school-level suspensions, graduation rates, and standardized test scores came from DPI reporting systems. Using statistical analyses, Wisconsin evaluators were able to compare participating schools with nonparticipating schools of like size. Their evaluation examined factors such as exclusionary discipline, alcohol and other drug use, bullying and the perception of a safe school environment, and academic performance.



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)

During the four years studied, the biggest change was in suspension rates, which schools reduced from an average of 25.4 percent of students to 11.2 percent, considerably more than that in the comparison high schools or statewide. Students also reported improvements in the areas of violence, alcohol and drug use, bullying and harassment, and general perception of safety.

Analysis of the effectiveness of various approaches to intervention proved challenging because no fixed set of interventions was implemented consistently and with fidelity in multiple schools. However, analyses found that schools participating in PBIS had improved attendance rates but also increases in student reports of violence, bullying, and harassment, noting that these results may be influenced by the heavy emphasis on PBIS in Milwaukee schools, where student perceptions of violence also were high. The total number of programs implemented was associated with less reduction in suspension rates but improved perceptions of safety and fair discipline. The use of EBPs improved high school graduation and suspension/expulsion rates. Structured programs had positive results on attendance rates; suspensions; and student academic commitment, perceived discipline, and climate. Individual programs were associated with positive effects on attendance, academics, discipline, and climate.

The final report showing the results can be found at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/safe-schools/safe-and-supportive>.

