

Education Innovation and Research Grant: Culturally Responsive Restorative Practices

Preliminary Data from Participating Schools, 2020–2021





Executive Summary

Austin Independent School District (AISD) was awarded a 5-year, \$3.5 million Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant from the U.S. Department of Education to implement culturally responsive restorative practices (CRRP) at six elementary schools and four middle schools in AISD. Through the work of seven restorative practices associates (RPAs), CRRP strives to cultivate a sustainable school-wide culture that values identity safety; inclusiveness; and trusting, caring relationships.

The 2020–2021 school year was the third year of CRRP implementation. While COVID-19 and the shift to a hybrid learning model served as ever-present challenges, RPAs continued to focus on relationship building with students, staff, and families while also facilitating professional learning sessions aimed at cultivating staff’s racial, cultural, and critical consciousness. The 2020–2021 school year included the following major findings:

- Nine out of ten principals from EIR campuses participated in AntiRacist Leadership for Principal Vertical Teams, a year-long professional learning series offered by the AISD Cultural Proficiency & Inclusiveness team.
- Twenty-one other staff members from EIR campuses completed professional learning opportunities offered by the Cultural Proficiency & Inclusiveness team.
- CRRP-related learning opportunities had more than 1,000 staff attendees
- Over 200 family and community members attended CRRP-related learning opportunities and events.
- Students reported significantly improved perceptions of school climate (e.g., felt safety and relationships with teachers and other school staff) at select campuses.
- Staff reported significantly improved perceptions of school climate at select campuses, with particular emphasis on greater perceived alignment of disciplinary practices with social and emotional learning (SEL).
- Use of exclusionary discipline decreased substantially at all EIR schools (and the district at large) following the shift to hybrid learning.
- State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) participation and passing rates declined dramatically at EIR middle schools, outpacing the middle school averages.

COVID-19 Impact on Reportable Data

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a negative impact on the availability and comparability of certain data. Many students elected to learn virtually in 2020–2021, which affected the comparability of student climate data with prior years due to differences in learning environments. While mandatory in prior years, STAAR was voluntary for students learning virtually in 2020–2021, which led to comparatively fewer students taking STAAR. Data affected by COVID-19 are noted throughout this report.

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Introduction

Educational research has well documented the association between exclusionary discipline practices (i.e., in-school or out-of-school suspensions) and academic and developmental outcomes. Studies have found that frequent use of exclusionary discipline is associated with greater academic disengagement, lower academic achievement, greater risk of dropping out, and greater likelihood of involvement in the juvenile justice system (Skiba et al., 2014). Notably, students who attended schools with more frequent use of exclusionary discipline were more likely to have later involvement in the criminal justice system as adults (e.g., Bacher-Hicks et al., 2019).

Spanning back to the 1970s, numerous studies have documented the longstanding over-representation of students of color in discipline data (see Skiba et al., 2011). Austin Independent School District (AISD) discipline data have mirrored these trends in recent years. During the 2019–2020 school year, Black and Latinx middle school students were 5.4 times and 2.7 times more likely, respectively, to experience exclusionary discipline than were their White peers. While research indicates male students comprise the majority of exclusionary discipline incidents, Black female middle school students in AISD were 8.0 times more likely to experience exclusionary discipline than were their White female peers in 2019–2020. Within this context, culturally responsive restorative practices (CRRP) were adapted by Dr. Angela Ward from the popularized restorative justice and restorative practices approaches to counteract the social, cultural, and historical inequities that continue to prevent academic and developmental success for all students.

What are culturally responsive restorative practices?

CRRP provides schools with a framework for cultivating a safe, relational, and, identity-affirming school climate for all students and staff. It aims to counteract the school-to-prison pipeline by reducing reliance on disciplinary removals and equipping students and staff with the resources and support to resolve conflict through trusting, caring relationships. CRRP is guided by five components:

- **Cultural proficiency:** Educators know their own cultural and racial lens, and understand the impact their biases, values, prejudices, and beliefs have on students' sense of safety and belonging, and academic success.
- **Classroom environment:** A safe, supportive classroom environment connects cultural and community-based knowledge through structures, processes, and protocols.
- **Identity safety:** Students, educators, parents, and caregivers have a sense of belonging and identity safety. All are personally affirmed, accepted, respected, included, and supported in the school environment.
- **Culturally responsive pedagogy:** Educators are facilitators of learning who vary their methods of teaching, employ asset-based pedagogy, and connect cultural and community knowledge in their classrooms to draw on the funds of knowledge so all students can learn and succeed.
- **Restorative practices (RPs):** Rooted in the traditions of Indigenous peoples,

restorative practices are used to build trusting relationships and social harmony. RPs recognize that a strong relational foundation is necessary to repair harm and, that conflict and tension are normal and natural and are resolved through processes that strengthen relationships, maintain trust, hold parties accountable, repair harm, and contribute to harmony. RPs are tiered as follows:

- **Universal** (tier 1): Educators proactively build and universally reaffirm relationships as a means of developing the social and emotional skills of the self and students.
- **Targeted** (tier 2): When conflict affects others in the school community, educators employ targeted interventions to repair relationships.
- **Intensive** (tier 3): When conflict has a serious impact on multiple members of the school community, educators use responsive and intensive levels of intervention involving agreed-upon stakeholders, including district and community supports, to repair and rebuild relationships, and to support the student re-entry process to their home campus, if needed.

Restorative practices associates (RPAs) have supported Education Innovation and Research (EIR) grant schools since the 2018–2019 school year through a mixture of relationship building, conflict resolution, coaching, professional learning facilitation, restorative and community-building circle facilitation, student leadership development and community building, mediation, and other duties, as needed.

EIR Campus Data for 2020–2021

Use of Exclusionary Discipline

A key leverage point for establishing a culturally responsive, restorative school culture is to encourage a restorative response to conflict and behavior. Rather than relying on exclusionary discipline (i.e., removal from the classroom) as the default response to conflict/behavior, a restorative response emphasizes building trust, repairing harm, taking accountability for one’s actions, and providing all involved with an opportunity to discuss and cultivate a shared understanding of different perspectives. In 2020–2021, RPAs continued to work with campus administrators to adopt a restorative response to conflict and behavior through the use of harm circles, mediation, and re-entry circles.

Table 1 details the use of exclusionary discipline at EIR schools. The district-wide shift to hybrid learning in 2020–2021 coincided with a dramatic reduction in the use of exclusionary discipline across the district. Given the relatively small sample, incidents per school day were not calculated at the elementary level. Elementary and middle school averages are included for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Table 1.

Use of Exclusionary Discipline at CRRP Schools

Level	School	% of enrolled students disciplined				Average # of incidents per disciplined student				Average # of incidents per school day			
		2018	2019	2020*	2021	2018	2019	2020*	2021	2018	2019	2020*	2021
Elementary	Barrington	< 1%	1%	< 1%	-	1.3	1.3	1.0	-	-	-	-	-
	Becker	-	< 1%	-	-	-	1.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Blanton	< 1%	-	-	-	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Blazier	1%	1%	< 1%	< 1%	1.8	1.5	1.3	1.0	-	-	-	-
	Cook	< 1%	1%	< 1%	-	2.5	2.0	1.0	-	-	-	-	-
	Pickle	2%	-	< 1%	-	1.9	-	1.0	-	-	-	-	-
	Elementary school average		1%	1%	1%	< 1%	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.0	-	-	-
Middle	Burnet	24%	28%	24%	< 1%	3.1	3.8	3.1	1.7	4.5	6.2	4.5	< 1.0
	Dobie	36%	27%	26%	1%	3.9	3.2	2.7	1.1	5.0	3.2	2.9	< 1.0
	Garcia	31%	27%	16%	1%	3.3	3.4	2.4	1.0	4.0	5.5	1.2	< 1.0
	Mendez	26%	31%	13%	1%	3.9	4.7	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.4	1.0	< 1.0
	Middle school average		19%	18%	13%	1%	2.8	2.8	2.3	1.4	2.6	2.7	1.6

Source. AISD discipline data

Note. Exclusionary discipline includes in-school suspensions (partial, full day, and long-term), home suspensions (partial and full day), expulsions, and removals. Dash indicates no data. For average # of incidents per school day, data for elementary schools were deemed not meaningful due to infrequent use.

* Data for 2019–2020 were available only through March 13, 2020, due to school closures related to COVID-19.

Students' Perceptions of School Climate

A core component of CRRP is the cultivation of an identity-safe school climate characterized by secure, trusting relationships among and between students and adults. Recent research provides compelling evidence of the positive impact of felt safety and secure relationships on academic achievement (e.g., Kraft et al., 2016) and psychological and physiological health outcomes later in life (e.g., Boen et al., 2020). Simply put, students had better academic, psychological, and physiological health outcomes when they felt safe and connected to peers and adults at school.

Figures 1–18 detail students' perceptions of school climate at EIR campuses for the past four school years (2017–2018 through 2020–2021). Survey items were selected for their alignment with the expected impacts of CRRP on peer and adult relationships, felt safety, conflict resolution skills, and student conduct. As noted last year (Fayles, 2020), some EIR campuses experienced challenges obtaining sufficiently large student survey samples: Blanton, Blazier, and Cook did not obtain sufficiently large student samples in 2019–2020, while Cook did not obtain a sufficiently large student sample again in 2020–2021.

AISD students were provided the opportunity to attend school virtually in 2020–2021, which resulted in EIR elementary and middle school students attending school virtually 46% and 61% of eligible school days, respectively. Undoubtedly, this switch in the daily learning environment had an impact on students' perceptions of school climate. Readers should keep this in mind when interpreting data from 2020–2021.

Additional data, including sample sizes, confidence intervals, school level averages, and Cohen's *d* effect sizes can be found in Appendix A. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

EIR Elementary Schools

As displayed in Figures 1–9, students at EIR elementary schools indicated steady improvements in their perceptions of school climate over the past 4 school years. Notably, the largest improvements occurred with respect to students' conduct (Figures 1, 3, and 4) and felt safety (Figure 2). The median improvement across EIR elementary schools over the last 4 years outpaced other AISD elementary schools for eight of the nine items included in this report. The one exception (students' sense of comfort speaking with adults about problems) remained largely unchanged at EIR elementary schools over the last 4 years (Figure 7). Across all survey items, only two campuses had ratings below the AISD elementary school average: Blanton students had comparatively low ratings of their peers treating teachers with respect (Figure 3), while Pickle students had comparatively low ratings of adults listening to their ideas and opinions (Figure 5).

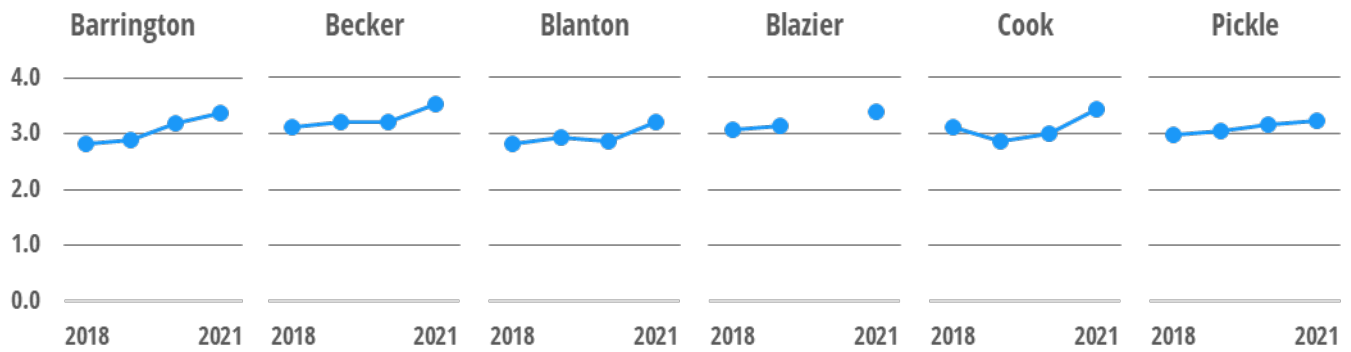
The report includes data from annual surveys conducted by AISD to assess perceptions of the AISD experience. Survey results are based on a sample of students, staff, and families. When using a sample to make inferences about a population, readers should interpret results with caution. To interpret the sample data cautiously, researchers use the following information to construct an interval that describes the range within which results for the population are likely to fall:

- population size: the total number of students
- sample size: the number of survey respondents
- confidence interval (CI): 95%

The 95% CI is commonly used to make inferences about a population. For example, based on a sample of 130 students from Barrington Elementary, we can be 95% confident that the true mean agreement with the statement "Students at my school follow the rules" is between 3.2 and 3.5 (on a scale of 1–4) for all students at Barrington. Appendices A–C include confidence intervals for student, staff, and family survey data.

Figure 1.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "Students at my school follow the school rules."

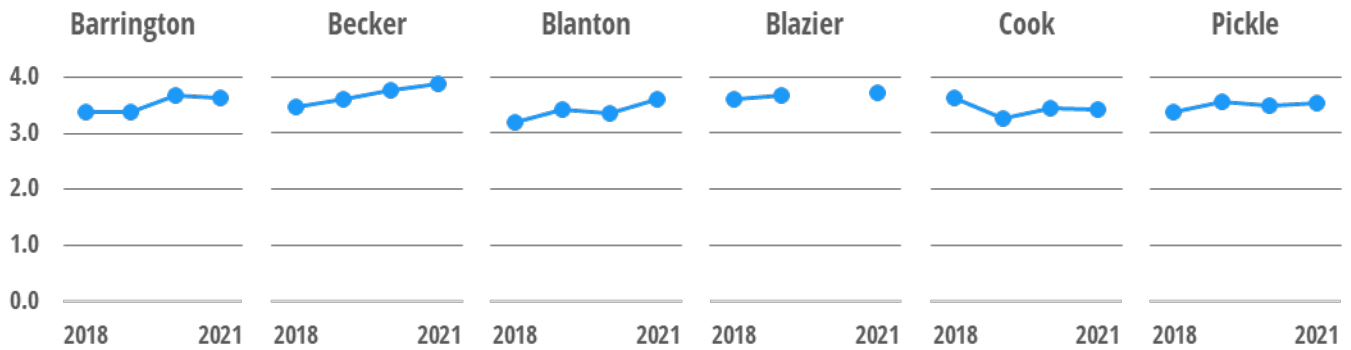


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = *A lot of the time*; 3 = *Sometimes*, 2 = *A little of the time*, 1 = *Never*. Responses of *Don't know / I prefer not to answer* were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 2.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "I feel safe at my school."

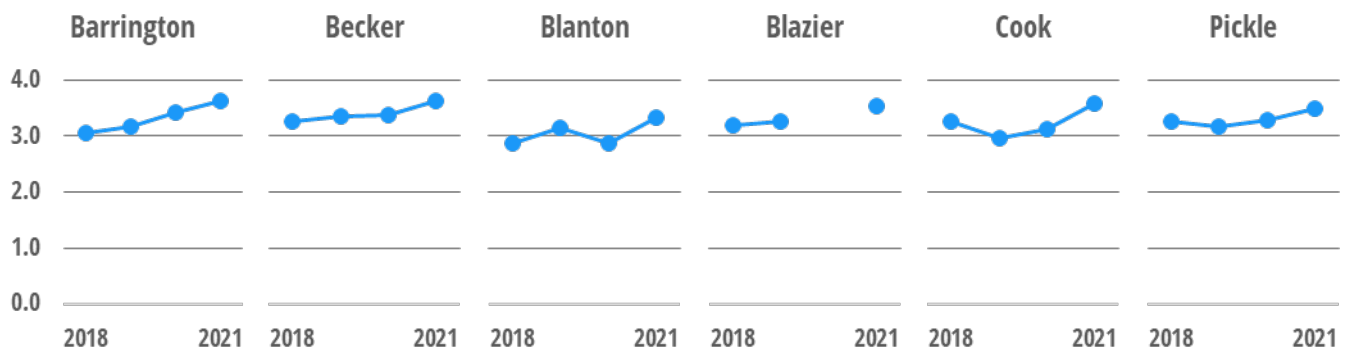


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = *A lot of the time*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 2 = *A little of the time*, 1 = *Never*. Responses of *Don't know / I prefer not to answer* were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 3.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "Students at my school treat teachers with respect."

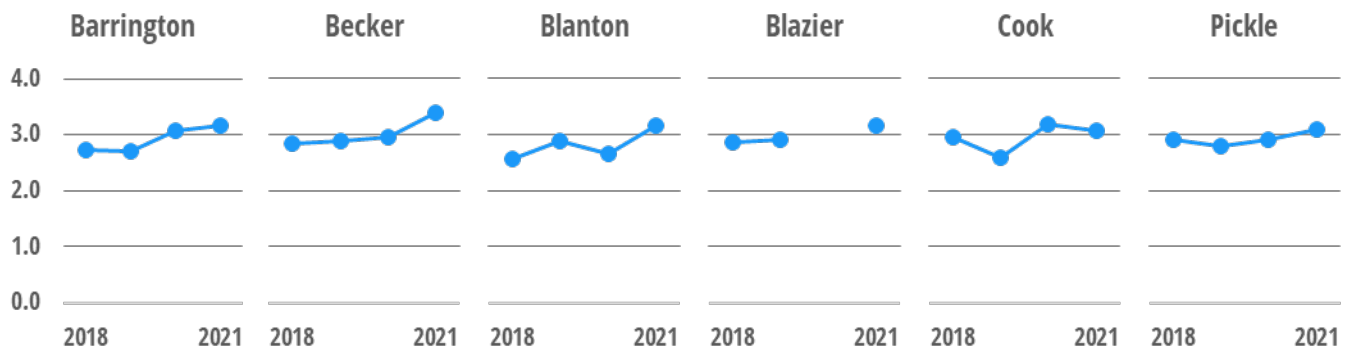


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = *A lot of the time*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 2 = *A little of the time*, 1 = *Never*. Responses of *Don't know / I prefer not to answer* were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 4.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to."

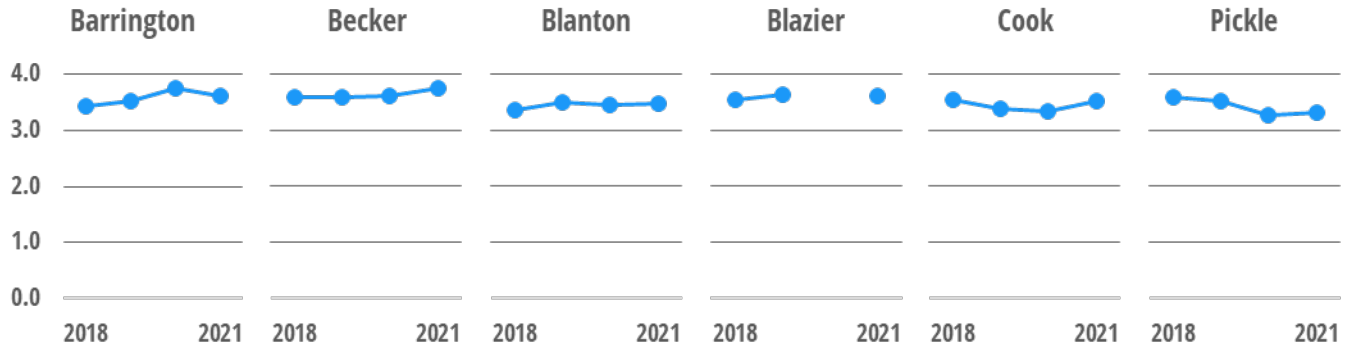


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = *A lot of the time*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 2 = *A little of the time*, 1 = *Never*. Responses of *Don't know / I prefer not to answer* were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 5.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "Adults at my school listen to students' ideas and opinions."

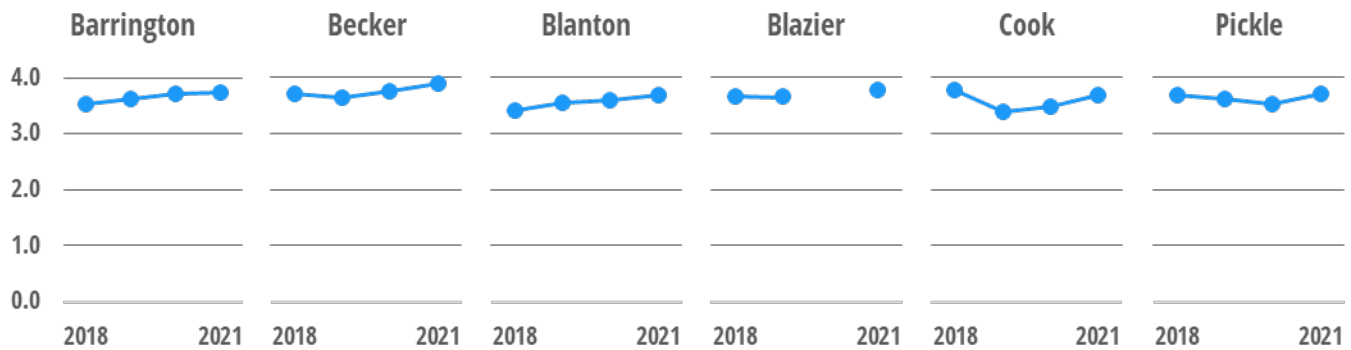


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 6.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "Adults at my school treat all students fairly."

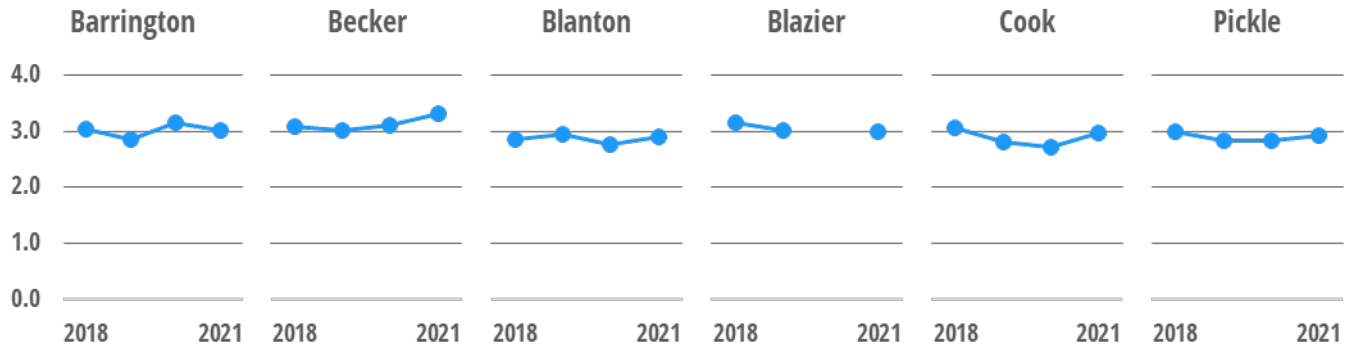


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 7.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "It is easy for me to talk to adults at my school about my problems."

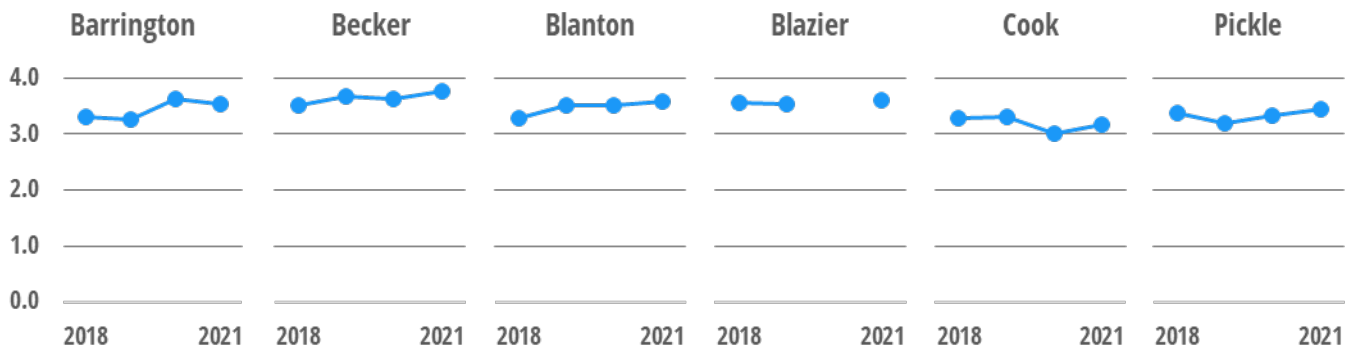


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 8.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "I say 'no' to friends who want me to break the rules."

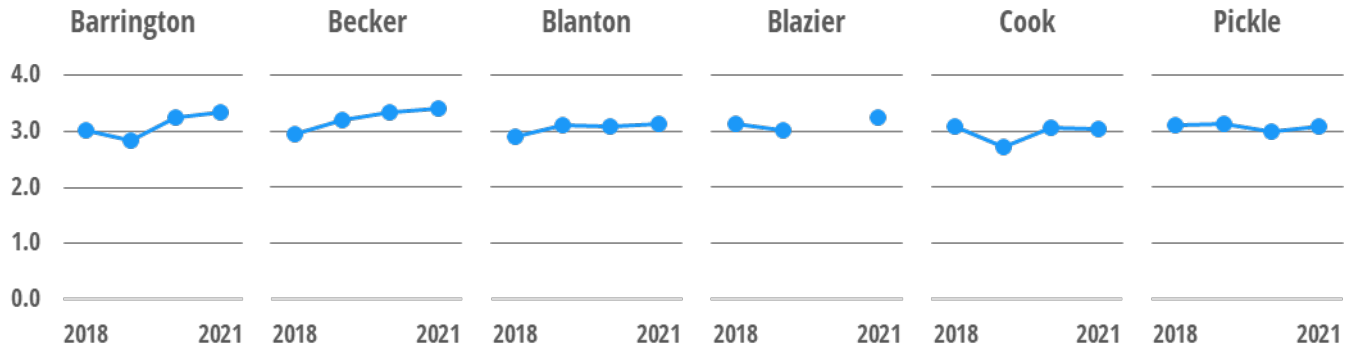


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 9.

Elementary School Students' Mean Agreement With "If I get angry with a classmate, we can talk about it and make it better."



Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. Blazier had fewer than 10 survey responses in 2019–2020. 4 = *A lot of the time*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 2 = *A little of the time*, 1 = *Never*. Responses of *Don't know / I prefer not to answer* were excluded from mean calculations.

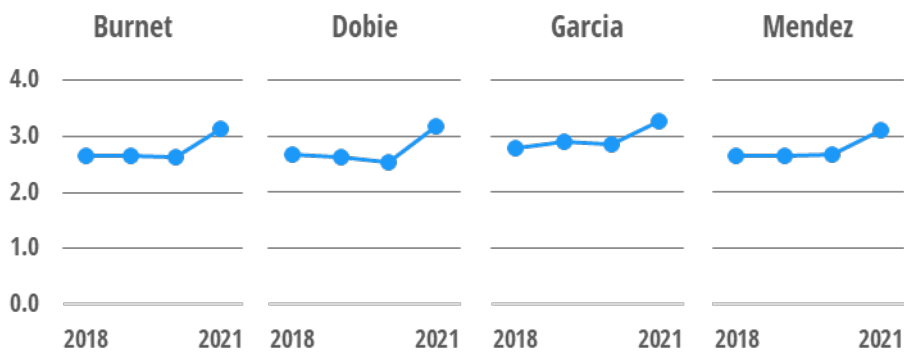
EIR Middle Schools

As displayed in Figures 10–19, students at EIR middle schools indicated substantially improved perceptions of school climate in 2020–2021. The largest improvements occurred with respect to students’ conduct (Figures 10, 12, and 13), felt safety (Figure 11), and perceived treatment by school staff (Figure 15). Like EIR elementary schools, students’ sense of comfort speaking with adults about problems remained largely unchanged over the last 4 years (Figure 16). As noted previously, the shift to virtual learning likely had a significant impact on students’ perceptions. Additional data and analyses can be found in Appendix A.

The median improvement across EIR middle schools over the last 4 years outpaced other AISD middle schools for seven of the nine items in this report. Of the two remaining items, one was largely unchanged across all AISD middle schools (Figure 14; students’ sense of comfort speaking with adults about problems), while both EIR and non-EIR middle schools experienced meaningful improvements with respect to the other item over the last 4 years (Figure 16; students’ perceptions that adults listen to their ideas and opinions). Perceptions of school climate were not meaningfully different between EIR and non-EIR middle schools in 2020–2021.

Figure 10.

Middle School Students’ Mean Agreement With “Students at my school follow the school rules.”

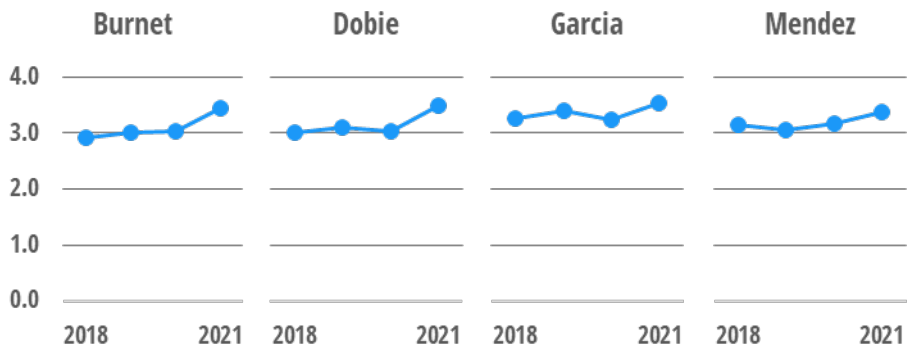


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 11.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "I feel safe at my school."

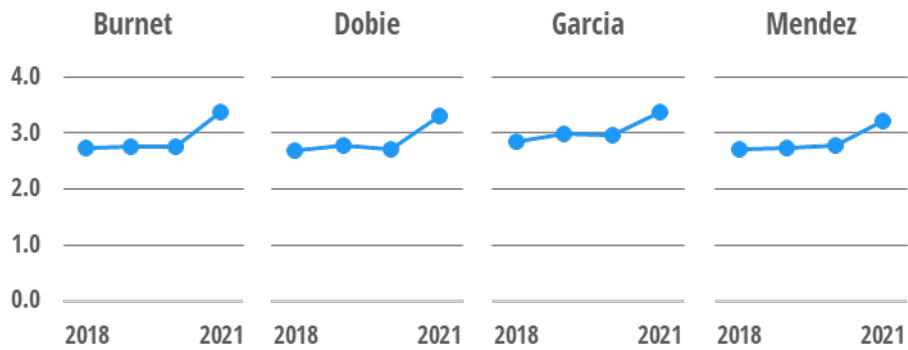


Source: AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 12.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "Students at my school treat teachers with respect."

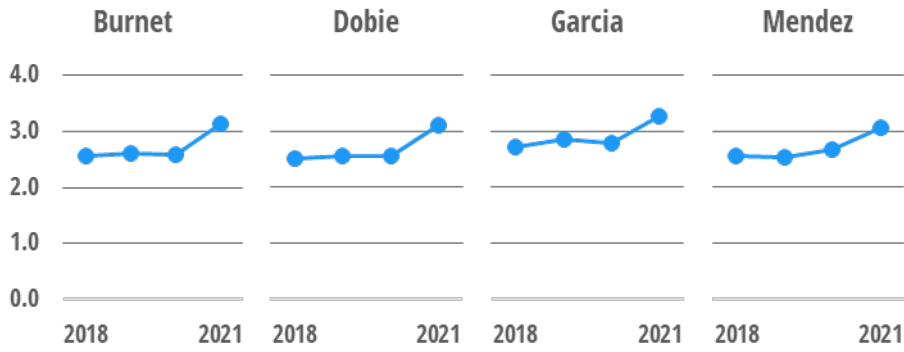


Source: AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 13.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to."

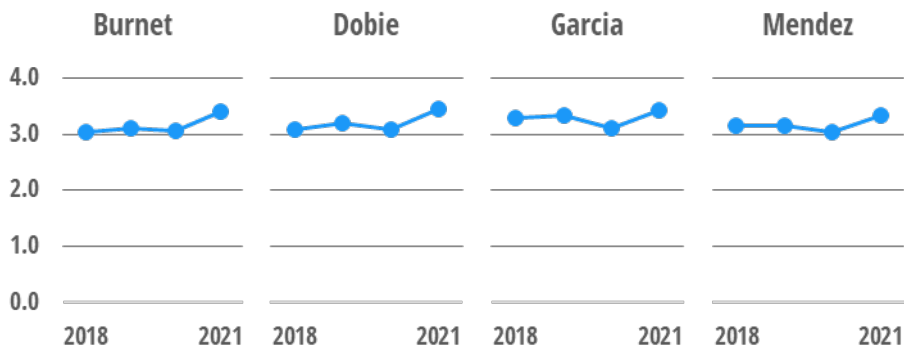


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 14.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "Adults at my school listen to students' ideas and opinions."

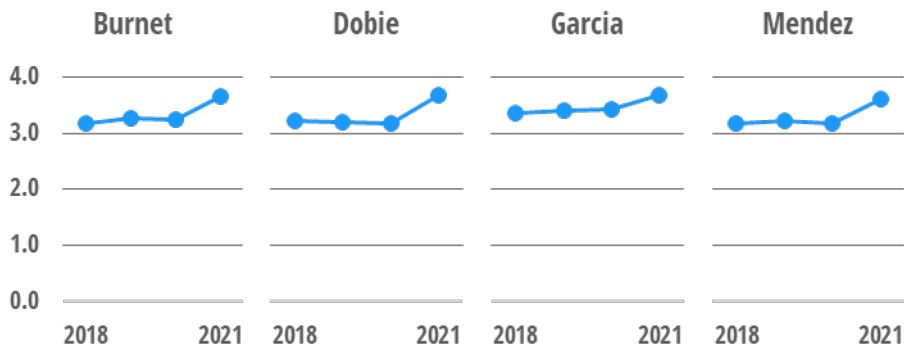


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time; 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 15.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "Adults at my school treat all students fairly."

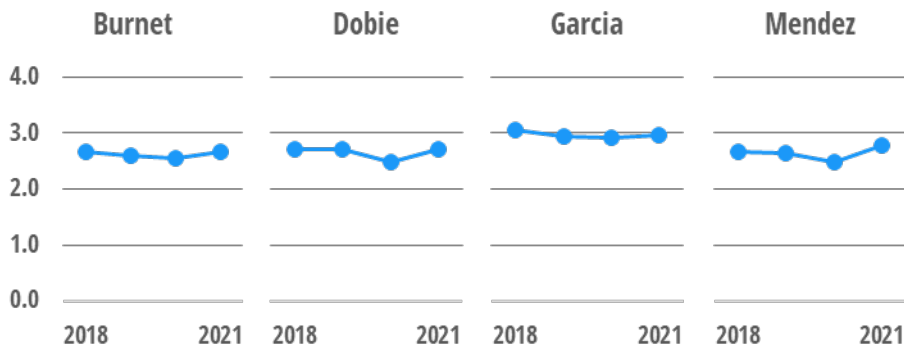


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 16.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "It is easy for me to talk to adults at my school about my problems."

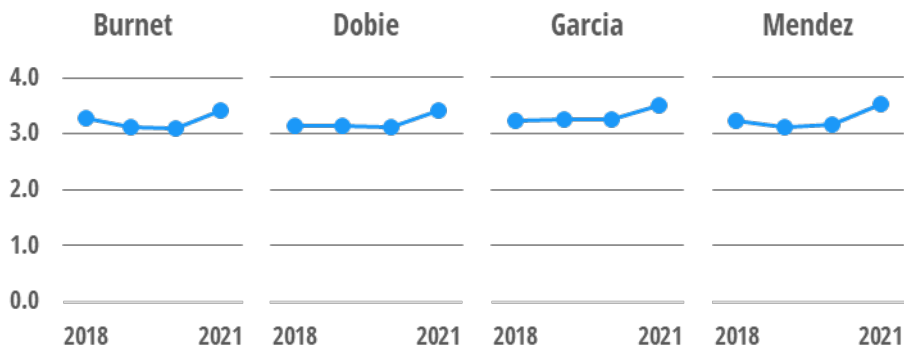


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 17.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "I say 'no' to friends who want me to break the rules."

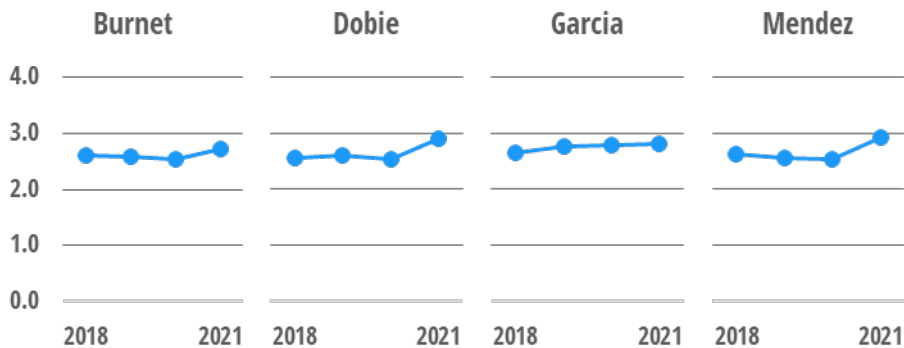


Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 18.

Middle School Students' Mean Agreement With "If I get angry with a classmate, we can talk about it and make it better."



Source. AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. 4 = A lot of the time, 3 = Sometimes, 2 = A little of the time, 1 = Never. Responses of Don't know / I prefer not to answer were excluded from mean calculations.

Staff's Perceptions of School Climate

RPA's have devoted significant time to cultivating staff's cultural and racial competence (i.e., the understanding and recognition that one's personal biases, values, beliefs, and lived experiences can negatively influence one's interactions, judgments, beliefs, and behaviors if unchecked through critical self-reflection). Within the context of public education, the cumulative impact of decisions made based on one's unchecked biases, values, beliefs, and experiences often directly contributes to the school-to-prison pipeline by influencing how educators interact with students of color.

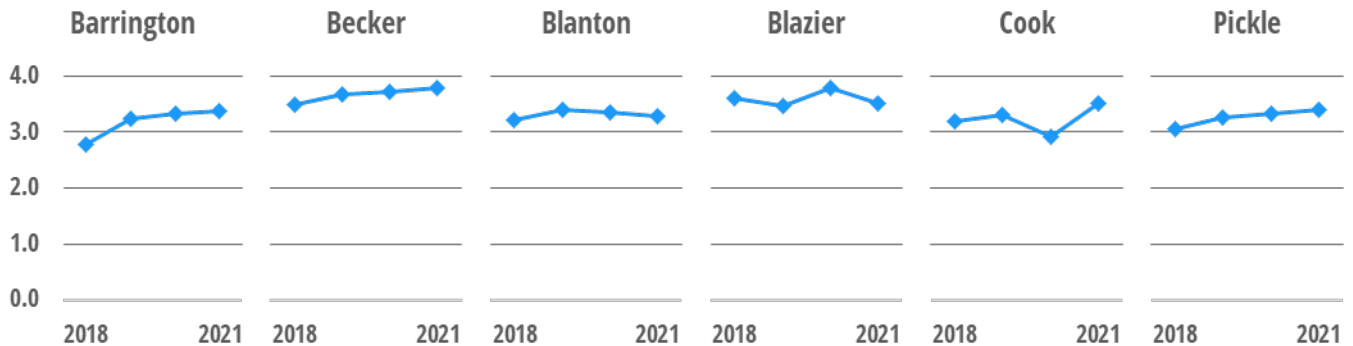
Cultivating a culturally responsive restorative school culture is theorized to correspond with improved perceptions of overall school climate, increased demonstration of staff's SEL skills, greater felt safety, and greater perceived use of restorative practices in the discipline process. However, staff's perceptions can be influenced by a variety of factors, including principal leadership, staff turnover, and broader societal and cultural factors (e.g., COVID-19).

EIR Elementary Schools

As detailed in Figures 19–23, staff at EIR elementary schools reported improvements in school climate across multiple dimensions between 2017–2018 and 2020–2021. Staff at EIR elementary schools reported meaningful improvements for four out of five tracked survey items, all of which outpaced the median improvement at non-EIR elementary schools. The lone exception—staff’s perceptions that their principal modeled SEL competence—had more variance due to principal turnover at multiple EIR campuses since 2018–2019. Staff at Blanton continued to report below average ratings with respect to overall climate, staff interactions, and perceived clarity of discipline policies and practices in 2020–2021, while staff at Becker continue to report above average ratings of school climate across all tracked items. Additional data and analyses can be found in Appendix B. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Figure 19.

Elementary School Staff’s Mean Agreement With “Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.”

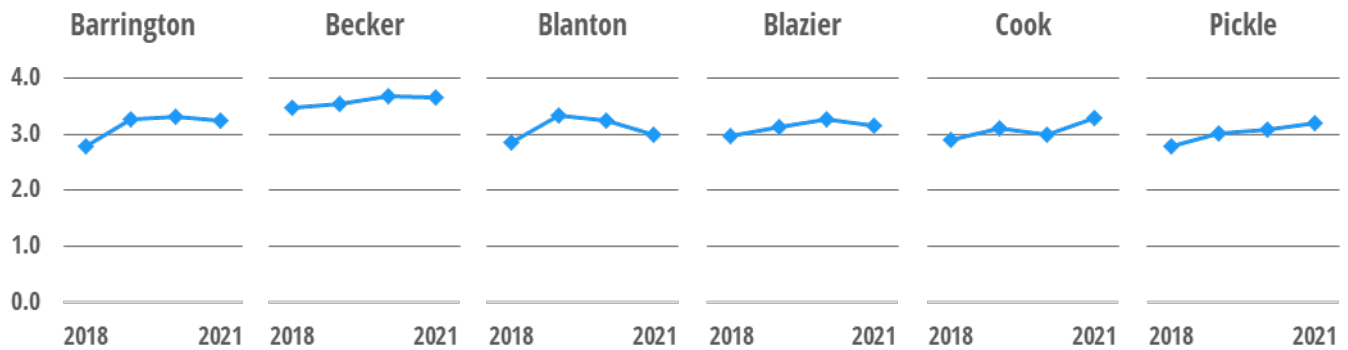


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don’t know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 20.

Elementary School Staff's Mean Agreement With "All campus staff interact with one another in a way that models social and emotional competence."

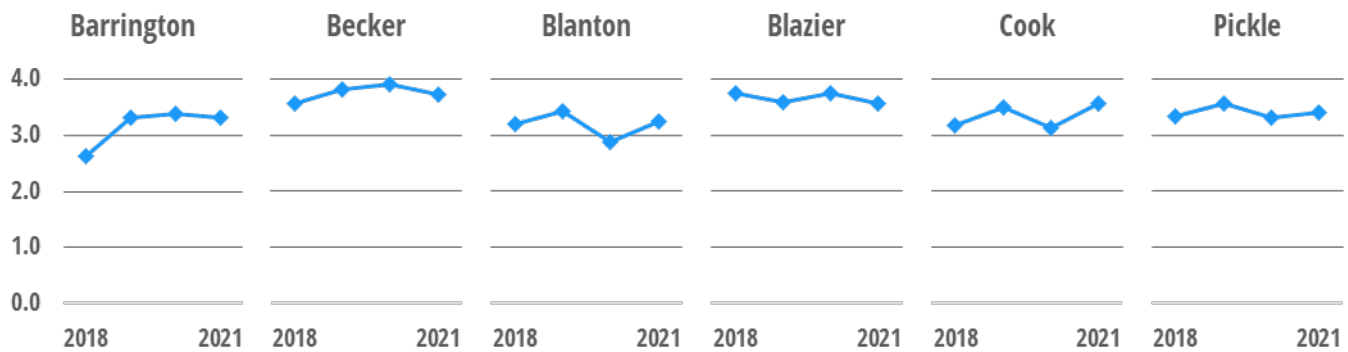


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 21.

Elementary School Staff's Mean Agreement With "My principal models social and emotional competence in the way he/she deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis."

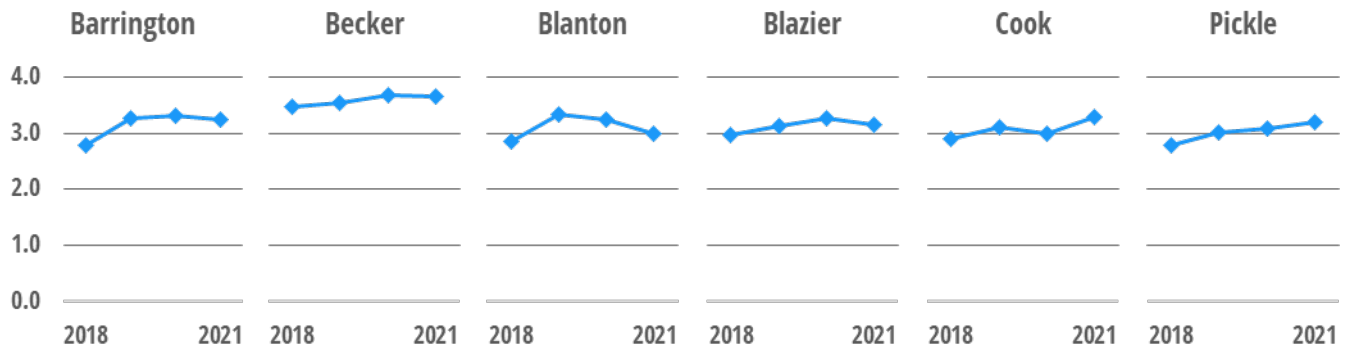


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 22.

Elementary School Staff's Mean Agreement With "This school's discipline practices promote social and emotional learning (e.g., developmentally appropriate consequences, restorative practices)."

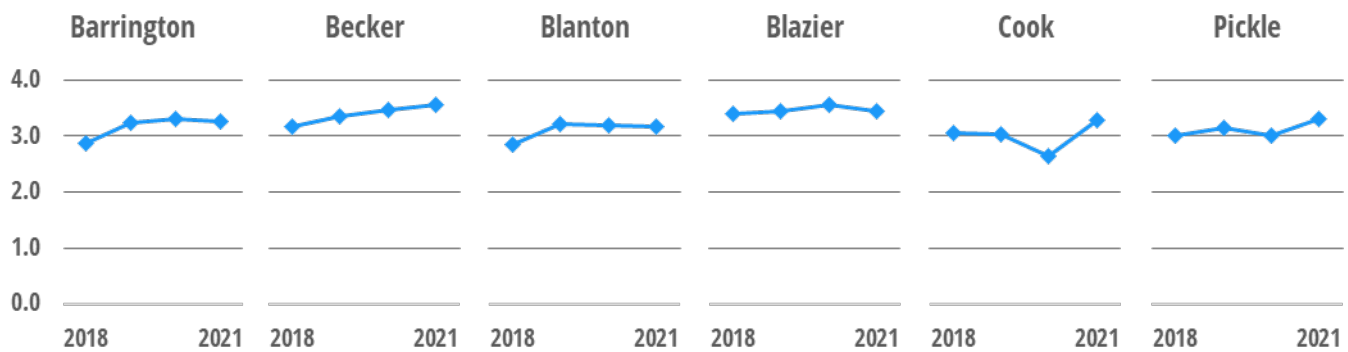


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 23.

Elementary School Staff's Mean Agreement With "School staff clearly understand policies and procedures about student conduct."



Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

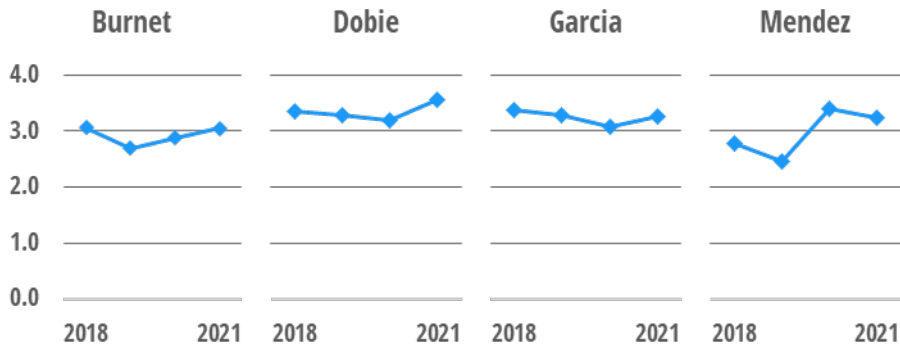
Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

EIR Middle Schools

As detailed in Figures 24–28, staff at EIR middle schools reported varied perceptions of school climate between 2017–2018 and 2020–2021. Staff at Dobie and Mendez indicated substantial improvements across a majority of items over the 4-year period, while staff at Garcia reported worse perceptions on four out of five items. For 2020–2021, staff at Burnet continued to report below average ratings with respect to overall climate and staff interactions, while staff at Garcia reported below average ratings of staff interactions. Additional data and analyses can be found in Appendix B. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Figure 24.

Middle School Staff's Mean Agreement With "Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn."

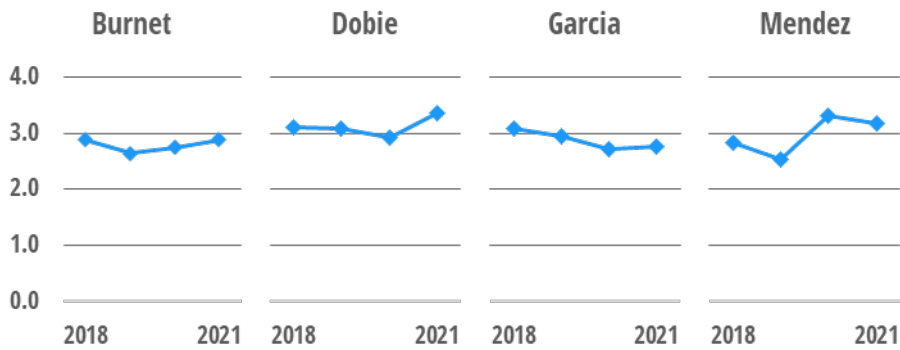


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 25.

Middle School Staff's Mean Agreement With "All campus staff interact with one another in a way that models social and emotional competence."

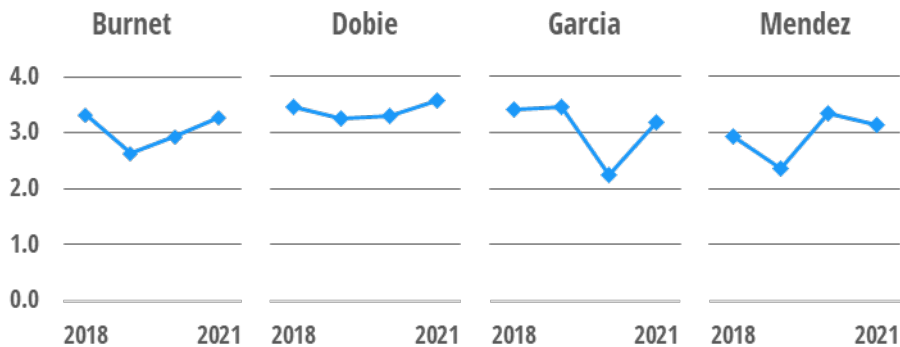


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 26.

Middle School Staff's Mean Agreement With "My principal models social and emotional competence in the way he/she deals with students and faculty on an everyday basis."

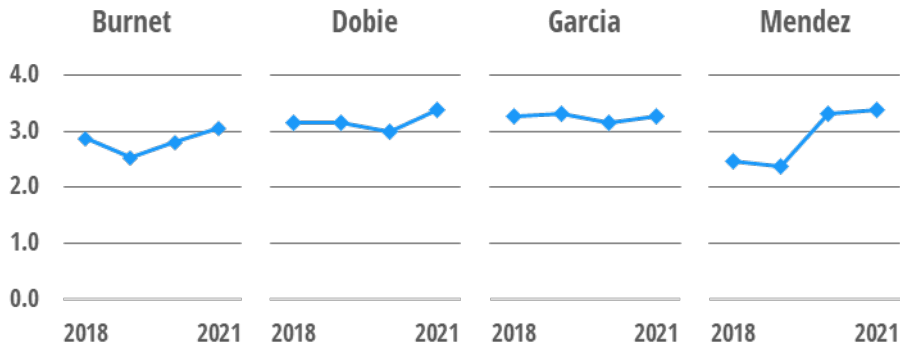


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 27.

Middle School Staff's Mean Agreement With "This school's discipline practices promote social and emotional learning (e.g., developmentally appropriate consequences, restorative practices)."

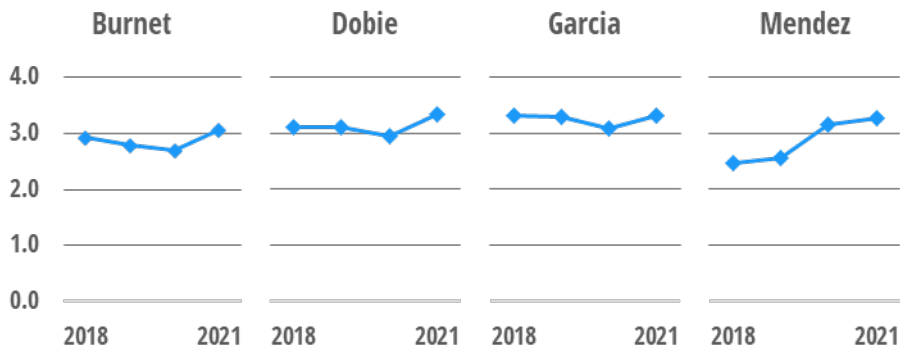


Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 28.

Middle School Staff's Mean Agreement With "School staff clearly understand policies and procedures about student conduct."



Source. AISD TELL Climate Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

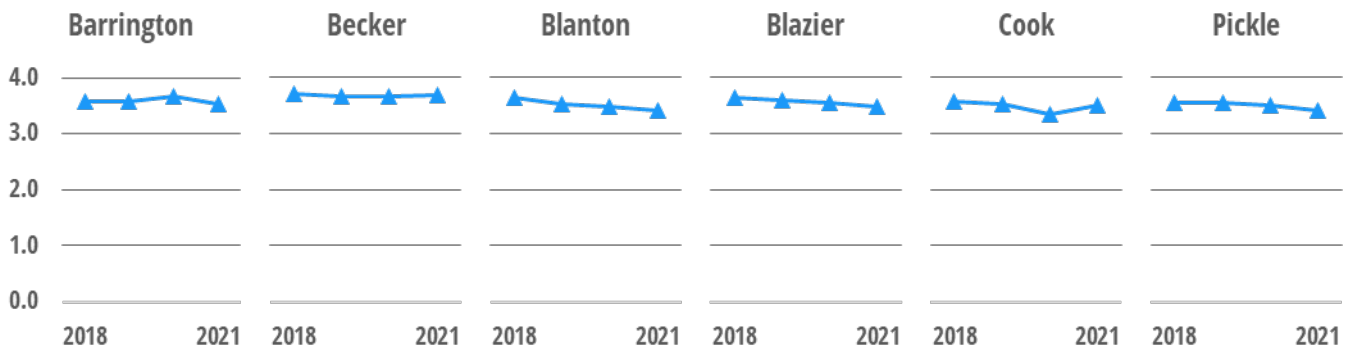
Parents' and Caregivers' Perceptions of School Climate

Figures 29–33 display parents' and caregivers' perceptions of their child's school climate for the last 4 school years. Compared with the perceptions of students and staff, parents' and caregivers' perceptions were relatively stable over the last 4 years. Overall, the general trend has been slightly lower agreement that their child (a) attended school in a safe learning environment, (b) liked attending school, and (c) was treated with respect by other students. Notably, parents' and caregivers' perceptions that their child liked going to school declined moderately over the 4-year period at Blanton, Blazier, and Burnet. Conversely, parents and caregivers at Garcia indicated substantial improvements over the 4-year period with respect to their child being treated with respect by other students. For the 2020–2021 school year, parents and caregivers at Dobie indicated above average perceptions that their child liked going to school.

Additional data and analyses can be found in Appendix C. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Figure 29.

Elementary School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child attends school in a safe learning environment."

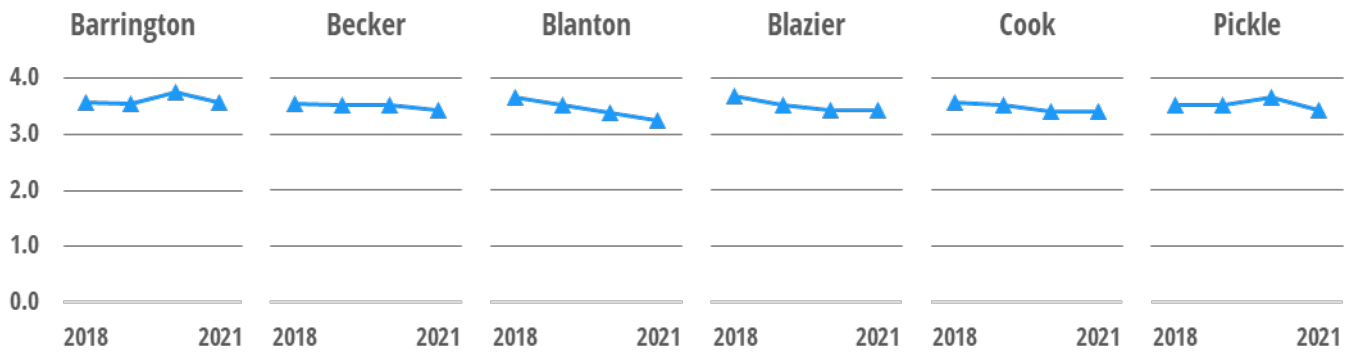


Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 30.

Elementary School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child likes going to school."

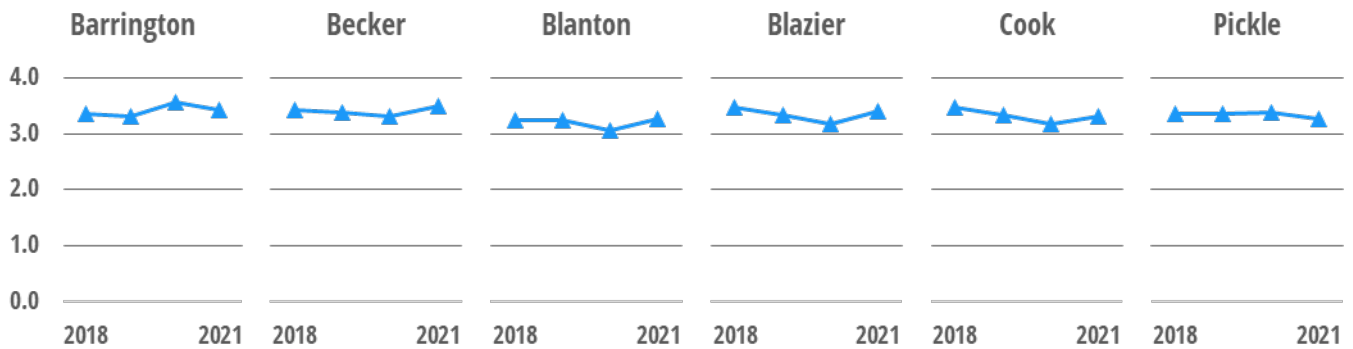


Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 31.

Elementary School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child is treated with respect by other students."

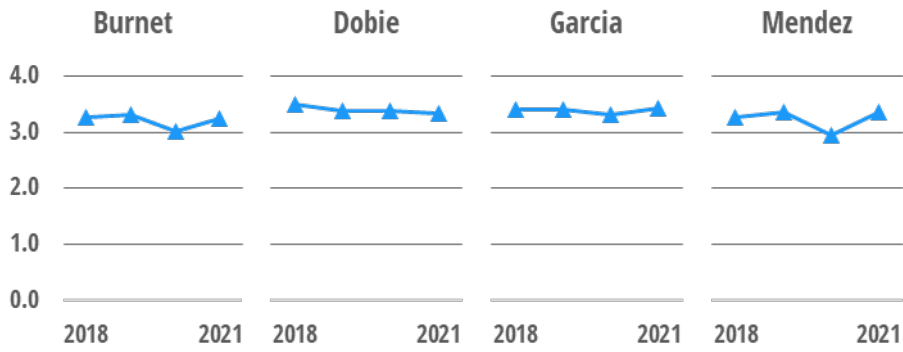


Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 32.

Middle School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child attends school in a safe learning environment."

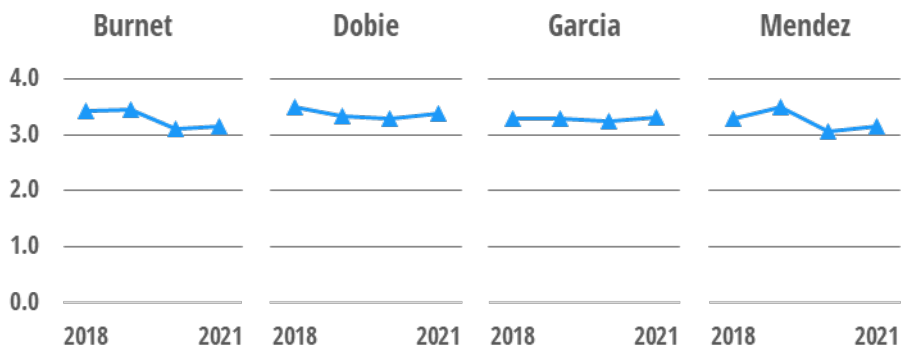


Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 33.

Middle School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child likes going to school."

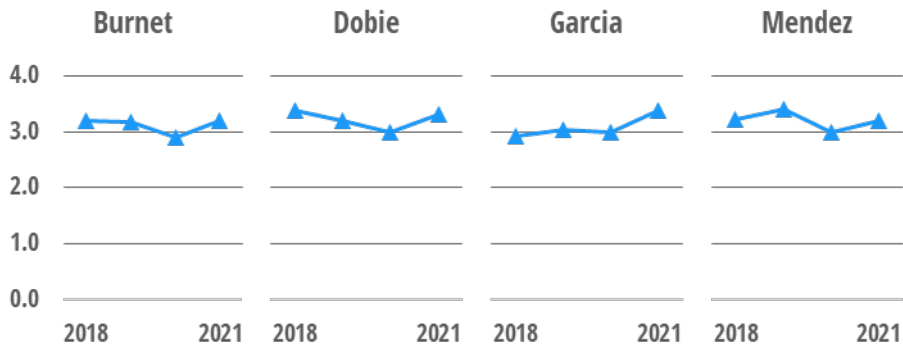


Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

Figure 34.

Middle School Parents' or Caregivers' Mean Agreement With "My child is treated with respect by other students."



Source. AISD Family Survey

Note. 4 = Strongly agree, 3 = Agree, 2 = Disagree, 1 = Strongly disagree. Responses of Don't know were excluded from mean calculations.

STAAR Passing Rates

Students in grades 3 through 8 take the STAAR on an annual basis. STAAR passing rates are monitored by AISD and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and used as an indicator of academic growth and achievement. CRRP is hypothesized to have a positive impact on STAAR performance by fostering culturally responsive and restorative pedagogical practices, improving peer and adult relationships, and fostering a greater sense of felt safety for students and staff.

As noted in last year’s report (Fayles, 2021), STAAR testing was canceled entirely for the 2019–2020 school year in response to COVID-19. For the 2020–2021 school year, STAAR testing was required for in-person learners and optional for virtual learners, which resulted in fewer students taking STAAR than in prior years and thus limited comparability. As displayed in Tables 2 and 3, the average elementary and middle school in AISD (and certain EIR campuses) experienced substantial declines in STAAR math and reading passing rates. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Table 2.

STAAR Math Passing Rates at CRRP Schools

Level	School	STAAR math passing rates			
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Elementary	Barrington	85% (<i>n</i> = 175)	66% (<i>n</i> = 162)	N/A	32% (<i>n</i> = 130)
	Becker	84% (<i>n</i> = 166)	87% (<i>n</i> = 167)	N/A	66% (<i>n</i> = 120)
	Blanton	76% (<i>n</i> = 188)	75% (<i>n</i> = 174)	N/A	62% (<i>n</i> = 151)
	Blazier	90% (<i>n</i> = 442)	91% (<i>n</i> = 467)	N/A	75% (<i>n</i> = 284)
	Cook	88% (<i>n</i> = 213)	85% (<i>n</i> = 182)	N/A	61% (<i>n</i> = 117)
	Pickle	70% (<i>n</i> = 222)	71% (<i>n</i> = 192)	N/A	30% (<i>n</i> = 201)
	ES AVG	82%	81%	N/A	51%
Middle	Burnet	58% (<i>n</i> = 836)	61% (<i>n</i> = 804)	N/A	18% (<i>n</i> = 375)
	Dobie	57% (<i>n</i> = 474)	54% (<i>n</i> = 467)	N/A	20% (<i>n</i> = 356)
	Garcia	67% (<i>n</i> = 313)	65% (<i>n</i> = 325)	N/A	16% (<i>n</i> = 169)
	Mendez	52% (<i>n</i> = 546)	34% (<i>n</i> = 510)	N/A	11% (<i>n</i> = 340)
	MS AVG	71%	71%	N/A	41%

Source. AISD STAAR records

Note. Calculation of passing rates differs from that used for accountability purposes. STAAR testing was canceled in 2019–2020 due to COVID-19. Virtual learners were not required to take the STAAR in 2020–2021.

Table 3.

STAAR Reading Passing Rates at CRRP Schools

Level	School	STAAR reading passing rates			
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Elementary	Barrington	56% (n = 175)	54% (n = 162)	N/A	58% (n = 132)
	Becker	82% (n = 167)	91% (n = 167)	N/A	86% (n = 123)
	Blanton	68% (n = 188)	71% (n = 174)	N/A	66% (n = 154)
	Blazier	84% (n = 441)	90% (n = 467)	N/A	80% (n = 282)
	Cook	82% (n = 213)	80% (n = 182)	N/A	69% (n = 116)
	Pickle	71% (n = 222)	71% (n = 192)	N/A	43% (n = 203)
	ES AVG	77%	78%	N/A	64%
Middle	Burnet	49% (n = 857)	49% (n = 846)	N/A	19% (n = 380)
	Dobie	56% (n = 504)	51% (n = 502)	N/A	34% (n = 383)
	Garcia	50% (n = 343)	55% (n = 376)	N/A	35% (n = 193)
	Mendez	48% (n = 567)	42% (n = 517)	N/A	26% (n = 348)
	MS AVG	69%	68%	N/A	52%

Source. AISD STAAR records

Note. Calculation of passing rates differs from that used for accountability purposes. STAAR testing was canceled in 2019–2020 due to COVID-19. Virtual learners were not required to take the STAAR in 2020–2021.

Student Attendance

CRRP aims to improve students’ attendance rates through the cultivation of an inclusive, identity-safe learning environment. Studies have found that missing school was associated with lower academic performance, increased risk of dropping out, and reduced likelihood of post-secondary enrollment (e.g., Balfanz, 2016).

Student attendance rates (Table 4) were calculated by reference to the percentage of days of in-person or virtual attendance for students enrolled at least 20 days in each school year. Certain campuses (Cook, Pickle, Dobie, and Mendez) experienced substantial declines in student attendance rates in 2020–2021. Elementary and middle school averages are referenced for informational purposes only. Grant performance is not assessed against these averages.

Table 4.

Student Attendance at CRRP Schools

Level	School	Attendance			
		2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21
Elementary	Barrington	96.7%	96.1%	95.7%	93.7%
	Becker	96.3%	96.7%	96.4%	98.5%
	Blanton	95.3%	96.1%	95.6%	94.4%
	Blazier	95.9%	96.3%	95.7%	94.9%
	Cook	96.1%	95.4%	95.1%	90.8%
	Pickle	96.8%	96.3%	95.7%	91.3%
	ES AVG	95.9%	96.0%	95.6%	93.4%
Middle	Burnet	92.3%	93.3%	92.9%	91.3%
	Dobie	93.3%	95.5%	94.7%	88.7%
	Garcia	94.3%	92.9%	94.0%	93.5%
	Mendez	90.1%	91.8%	93.1%	87.7%
	MS AVG	94.4%	94.7%	94.5%	93.5%

Source. AISD attendance data

Note. Attendance rates for 2019–2020 were calculated by reference to all school days through March 13, 2020. Calculations only included students enrolled for more than 20 school days.

Conclusion

RPA's faced numerous challenges to their work in 2020–2021, including the ongoing global pandemic, the hybrid learning environment, a renewed districtwide focus on student academic performance, staff turnover, and turnover within the EIR grant team. Despite these challenges, EIR campuses experienced generally positive changes in perceptions of school climate in areas theorized to align with CRRP work. RPA's will continue to focus on deepening their work in 2021–2022, which is the final year of the grant. With respect to CRRP dissemination and sustainability, research partners at the American Institutes for Research and University of Texas–Austin will disseminate research findings following the 2021–2022 school year.

Appendix A

Table 5.

Students' Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Elementary Schools

2020–2021 Student Climate Survey	95% CI of the mean						ES AVG (N = 11,283)
	Barrington (n = 130)	Becker (n = 140)	Blanton* (n = 164)	Blazier* (n = 356)	Cook** (n = 73)	Pickle* (n = 189)	
Students at my school follow the school rules.	3.2–3.5	3.4–3.6 ⁺	3.1–3.3	3.3–3.5	3.3–3.6	3.1–3.3	3.4
I feel safe at my school.	3.5–3.8	3.8–3.9	3.5–3.7	3.6–3.8	3.2–3.7	3.4–3.7	3.7
Students at my school treat teachers with respect.	3.5–3.8	3.5–3.7 ⁺	3.2–3.4	3.5–3.6	3.4–3.8	3.4–3.6	3.6
My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to.	3.0–3.3	3.3–3.5 ⁺⁺	3.1–3.3	3.1–3.2	2.9–3.3	3.0–3.2	3.2
Adults at my school listen to student ideas and opinions.	3.5–3.7	3.7–3.8	3.4–3.6	3.5–3.7	3.3–3.7	3.2–3.4	3.6
Adults at my school treat all students fairly.	3.6–3.8	3.8–4.0	3.6–3.8	3.7–3.8	3.5–3.8	3.6–3.8	3.8
It is easy for me to talk about my problems with adults at my school.	2.8–3.2	3.2–3.5	2.7–3.1	2.9–3.1	2.7–3.2	2.8–3.1	3.0
I say “no” to friends who want me to break the rules.	3.4–3.7	3.7–3.9	3.4–3.7	3.5–3.7	2.9–3.5	3.3–3.6	3.6
If I get angry with a classmate, we can talk about it and make it better.	3.1–3.5	3.3–3.6	3.0–3.3	3.1–3.4	2.7–3.3	2.9–3.3	3.2

Source. AISD Student Climate Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (1) never, (2) a little of the time, (3) sometimes, (4) a lot of the time, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* were excluded from analysis. Higher mean score indicates greater agreement. Only students in grades 3 through 5 participated in the survey. **Blue** indicates above average ratings (Cohen's $d > .3$). **Red** indicates below average ratings (Cohen's $d > .3$).

* = inadequate sample size for year-over-year comparison

** = inadequate sample size for year-over-year and school level average comparisons

⁺ = small increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .3$)

⁺⁺ = moderate increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .5$)

Table 6.

Students' Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Middle Schools

2020–2021 Student Climate Survey	95% CI of the mean				MS AVG (N = 9,932)
	Burnet (n = 573)	Dobie (n = 474)	Garcia (n = 233)	Mendez (n = 357)	
Students at my school follow the school rules.	3.1–3.2 ⁺⁺	3.1–3.2 ⁺⁺	3.2–3.4 ⁺	3.0–3.2 ⁺⁺	3.2
I feel safe at my school.	3.4–3.5 ⁺	3.4–3.6 ⁺	3.4–3.7 ⁺	3.3–3.5	3.5
Students at my school treat teachers with respect.	3.3–3.4 ⁺⁺	3.2–3.4 ⁺⁺	3.3–3.5 ⁺	3.1–3.3 ⁺⁺	3.4
My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to.	3.1–3.2 ⁺⁺	3.1–3.2 ⁺⁺	3.2–3.4 ⁺⁺	3.0–3.1 ⁺	3.2
Adults at my school listen to student ideas and opinions.	3.3–3.5 ⁺	3.4–3.5 ⁺	3.3–3.5 ⁺	3.3–3.4 ⁺	3.4
Adults at my school treat all students fairly.	3.6–3.7 ⁺	3.6–3.7 ⁺⁺	3.6–3.8	3.5–3.7 ⁺	3.6
It is easy for me to talk about my problems with adults at my school.	2.6–2.8	2.6–2.8	2.8–3.1	2.7–2.9	2.7
I say “no” to friends who want me to break the rules.	3.3–3.5 ⁺	3.3–3.5 ⁺	3.4–3.6	3.4–3.6 ⁺	3.6
If I get angry with a classmate, we can talk about it and make it better.	2.6–2.8	2.8–3.0 ⁺	2.6–3.0	2.8–3.1 ⁺	3.0

Source. AISD Student Climate Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (1) never, (2) a little of the time, (3) sometimes, (4) a lot of the time, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* have been excluded from the analysis. Higher scores indicate greater agreement.

⁺ = small increase from previous school year (Cohen's *d* > .3)

⁺⁺ = moderate increase from previous school year (Cohen's *d* > .5)

Appendix B

Table 7.

Staff's Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Elementary Schools

2020–2021 Staff Climate Survey	95% CI of the mean						ES AVG (N = 3,514)
	Barrington (n = 39)	Becker (n = 32)	Blanton (n = 50)	Blazier (n = 64)	Cook (n = 47)	Pickle (n = 52)	
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	3.1–3.6	3.6–3.9	3.1–3.5	3.3–3.7	3.3–3.7 ⁺⁺	3.2–3.6	3.5
My principal models social and emotional competence in the way he/she deals with students and faculty.	3.0–3.6	3.5–3.9	3.0–3.5 ⁺	3.4–3.7	3.4–3.8 ⁺⁺	3.2–3.6	3.5
All campus staff interact with one another in a way that models social and emotional competence.	3.0–3.5	3.4–3.9	2.8–3.2	2.9–3.4	3.1–3.5 ⁺	3.0–3.4	3.3
This school's discipline practices promote social and emotional learning (e.g., restorative practices).	3.2–3.6	3.6–3.9	3.1–3.5	3.5–3.7	3.3–3.6 ⁺⁺⁺	3.1–3.6 ⁺	3.5
School staff clearly understand policies and procedures about student conduct.	3.0–3.5	3.3–3.8	3.0–3.3	3.3–3.6	3.1–3.5 ⁺⁺	3.1–3.5 ⁺	3.4

Source. AISD Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (4) strongly agree, (3), agree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* were excluded from the analysis. Higher scores indicate greater agreement. **Blue** indicates ratings above the the elementary school average (Cohen's $d > .3$). **Red** indicates below average ratings (Cohen's $d > .3$).

⁻ = small decrease from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .3$)

⁺ = small increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .3$)

⁺⁺ = moderate increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .5$)

⁺⁺⁺ = large increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .8$)

Table 8.

Staff's Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Middle Schools

2020–2021 Staff Climate Survey	95% CI of the mean				MS AVG (N = 1,331)
	Burnet (n = 71)	Dobie (n = 62)	Garcia (n = 47)	Mendez (n = 61)	
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	2.9–3.2	3.4–3.7 ⁺	3.1–3.4	3.0–3.4	3.4
My principal models social and emotional competence in the way he/she deals with students and faculty.	3.0–3.5 ⁺	3.4–3.7 ⁺	3.0–3.4 ⁺⁺⁺	2.9–3.4	3.4
All campus staff interact with one another in a way that models social and emotional competence.	2.7–3.1	3.2–3.5 ⁺⁺	2.5–3.0	3.0–3.4	3.2
This school's discipline practices promote social and emotional learning (e.g., restorative practices).	2.9–3.2	3.2–3.5 ⁺	3.0–3.5	3.2–3.5	3.2
School staff clearly understand policies and procedures about student conduct.	2.9–3.2 ⁺	3.2–3.5 ⁺⁺	3.1–3.5	3.1–3.4	3.2

Source. AISD TELL Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (4) strongly agree, (3), agree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* were excluded from the analysis. Higher scores indicate greater agreement. Red indicates below average ratings (Cohen's $d > .3$).

⁺ = small increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .3$)

⁺⁺ = moderate increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .5$)

⁺⁺⁺ = large increase from previous school year (Cohen's $d > .8$)

Appendix C

Table 9.

Parents' and Caregivers' Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Elementary Schools

2020–2021 Parent Survey	95% CI of the mean						ES AVG (N = 13,626)
	Barrington (n = 180)	Becker (n = 275)	Blanton (n = 266)	Blazier (n = 248)	Cook (n = 106)	Pickle (n = 70)	
My child attends school in a safe learning environment.	3.4–3.6	3.6–3.8	3.3–3.5	3.4–3.6	3.4–3.6	3.2–3.6	3.6
My child likes going to school.	3.5–3.7	3.4–3.5	3.2–3.4	3.3–3.5	3.3–3.5	3.3–3.6 ⁻	3.5
My child is treated with respect by other students.	3.3–3.5	3.4–3.6	3.2–3.4	3.3–3.5	3.2–3.5	3.1–3.4	3.4

Source. AISD Parent Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (4) strongly agree, (3), agree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* were excluded from the analysis. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with the survey item.

⁻ = small decrease from previous school year (Cohen's *d* > .3)

Table 10.

Parents' and Caregivers' Perceptions of School Climate at CRRP Middle Schools

2020–2021 Parent Survey	95% CI of the mean				MS AVG (N = 4,950)
	Burnet (n = 223)	Dobie (n = 85)	Garcia (n = 68)	Mendez (n = 104)	
My child attends school in a safe learning environment.	3.2–3.3 ⁺	3.2–3.5	3.3–3.6	3.2–3.5 ⁺	3.4
My child likes going to school.	3.0–3.3	3.3–3.5	3.1–3.5	3.0–3.3	3.1
My child is treated with respect by other students.	3.1–3.3 ⁺	3.2–3.5 ⁺	3.2–3.6 ⁺	3.0–3.4	3.2

Source. AISD Parent Survey.

Note. Survey response options included (4) strongly agree, (3), agree, (2) disagree, (1) strongly disagree, and don't know. Responses of *don't know* were excluded from the analysis. Higher scores indicate greater agreement with the survey item. **Red** indicates ratings above the elementary school average (Cohen's *d* > .3).

⁺ = small increase from previous school year (Cohen's *d* > .3)

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October 2021

Publication 20.37