Recognizing Community Voice and a Youth-Led School–Community Partnership in the School Climate Improvement Process

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Abstract

A growing body of school improvement research suggests that engaging all members of the school community, including community members and leaders, provides an essential foundation to successful school improvement efforts. School climate surveys to date tend to recognize student, parent/guardian, and school personnel voice but not the voice of community members. The *Community Scale* and the youth-led *School–Community Partnership Process* acknowledges the perceptions of community members and the importance of school–community partnership. This process engages secondary students to be active co-learners and co-leaders. The *Community Scale* is a short survey that asks community members about their perception of the school climate, the level of school–community partnership, and the extent to which they would be interested in learning about and supporting the school's improvement goals. In the *School–Community Partnership Process*, students are involved in administering this survey to various sectors of the larger school community. The results are then used to develop partnerships between community organizations and the school. This paper details one school's experience piloting the *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process*. The aim of this study was to better understand community members' perceptions of school climate and their level of interest in working with schools to improve it.

Key Words: school climate, school–community partnerships, Community Scale, community voice, youth leadership, high school students, improvement

Introduction

Students in K–12 schools and their teachers *need* parents/guardians and even community members to be partners in the process of supporting students' healthy development and capacity to learn socially, emotionally, and civically as well as intellectually (Fullan, 2011; Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Patrikakou, Weissberg, Redding, & Walberg, 2005). School leaders generally appreciate that school–community partnerships provide an essential foundation for school life and student learning, but this is rarely a central goal for improvement efforts today (Epstein et al., 2008). School–community partnerships tend to be talked about more than practiced in American K–12 public education for many reasons. Often, the importance of establishing school–community partnerships is overlooked, as district leaders and principals are faced with enormous pressure to meet academic standards (Renée & McAlister, 2011). Many school leaders are unclear about how to practically achieve this goal (Cohen, 2014). More importantly, school leaders are unclear about how to foster a long-lasting relationship with the community.

School climate reform has been described as a process that ideally engages the "whole village" to support the "whole child" (Cohen, 2011). School climate evaluations allow principals to let students, parents, and school personnel know that their perception of the school's strengths and needs and their goals for the school are valued. A growing body of school improvement research suggests that engaging *all* members of the community to be intrinsically motivated co-learners and co-leaders creates *the* essential foundation for successful school improvement efforts (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010; Fullan, 2011, 2014; Mourshed, Chijioke, & Barber, 2010; Tucker, 2011). School climate survey evaluations serve as an engagement strategy as well as a means of establishing baseline and outcome measures of a school's strengths and needs: socially, emotionally, civically, and intellectually (Cohen, 2012).

Current school climate surveys identify student, parent/guardian, and school personnel voice but not the voice of community members. The *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process* recognize the perspective of community members by seeking their outlook on school–community partnership and on school climate with the goal of using these results to spark development of such partnerships. The process also develops secondary students' leadership, civic, and research skills by having them administer a short survey to various sectors of the larger school community, including political leaders, artists, and public safety officers (Cohen & Dary, 2012). This short survey asks community members about their perceptions of the local school–

community partnership and to what extent they would be interested in learning about and supporting the school's improvement goals. It also asks them to share their perceptions of the school's overall climate. This paper describes one school's experience in using the *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process* to build meaningful bridges between their school and the larger school community. This school was chosen because of their administration of a school climate survey to students, parents, and staff annually. Due to the superintendent's strong commitment to school climate reform and the district's clearly defined community borders, this school was expected to serve as a good example of the *School–Community Partnership Process*. Before we detail the development of this scale and explain the process, we would like to summarize research on school climate reform in general and school–community partnership in particular.

Trends in School Climate Reform

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life[1] (National School Climate Council, 2007). An effective school climate improvement process engages students, parents/guardians, school personnel, and even community members in a meaningful, democratically informed process of learning, co-leadership, and school improvement (see Appendix A for a more detailed definition of school climate improvement process).

School climate reform has garnered growing support and endorsement from federal agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009), Institute for Educational Sciences (Dynarski et al., 2008), and the U.S. Department of Education (2011, 2013). There are a range of factors contributing to growth in interest in school climate reform. These include a robust and growing body of experimental as well as correlational and ethnographic research that underscores that school climate positively impacts safety and effective violence prevention efforts, student dropout rates, teacher retention, and academic achievement over a three to five year period (for a recent summary of this work, see Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

There is a robust body of educational, sociological, and socioeconomic research that supports the notion that student learning and youth development are positively shaped not only by effective school–family partnerships (e.g., Henderson et al., 2007; Patrikakou et al., 2005) but also by the social networks and norms of the larger community and by engaged and collaborative partnerships (Adelman & Taylor, 2005; Berg, Melaville, & Blank, 2006; Glickman & Scally, 2008; Putnam, 2001; Renée & McAlister, 2011). Epstein et al. (2002) identifies six types of actions that support successful family and community

partnerships, including parenting guidance, clear communication, volunteer opportunities, encouraging learning at home, inclusive decision making, and collaboration with the community. Although a common belief is that the extent of community organizations' school support is largely financial, there are many ways that community organizations can support schools. DeHavilland Associates (2007) identifies various types of community support, including financial, goods and services, volunteers, mentors, talent development, student services, instruction, expertise, and advocacy.

Although school climate reform is grounded in the notion that all in the community need to be co-learners and co-leaders in a democratically informed manner (National School Climate Council, 2007, 2012), as noted above, school climate measurement and improvement efforts to date focus on students, parents/guardians, and school personnel within the school (Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, & Hornung, 2012; Gangi, 2009; Haggerty, Elgin, & Woolley, 2010). Leiter (1983) interestingly examined through a questionnaire how school personnel's perception of community dissatisfaction affected the school environment. School personnel reported on whether the community trusts and supports the school. McCracken and Miller (1988) similarly explored the perceptions of teachers in rural schools regarding community–school relationships through interviews, specifically asking them about community members' expectations, esteem, and support for teachers. Community members' thoughts on school–community partnerships were garnered through interviews in a study where both urban and rural teachers and stakeholders in the school community in Cyprus were asked to what extent they believe teachers and community members should work together (Anaxagorou, 2007). Communities that Care created the *Communities that Care Youth Survey*, which measures risk and protective factors that influence communities' adolescent populations, and suggested using the results of the survey to guide community improvement (Arthur et al., 2007). Most recently, a school district in South Dakota has developed a short survey for community members to share their thoughts on the school system and the way it shares information with them (Wischmeyer, 2013). However, a reliable and valid tool that quickly and comprehensively measures community perceptions of school climate and school–community partnership has yet to be developed.

Development of the *Community Scale*

The *Community Scale* was developed by the National School Climate Center (NSCC) to incorporate school–community partnership into school climate assessment and to recognize the importance of community voice. Other surveys

of community members' perceptions on schools and community resources were researched and reviewed. A set of questions related to school climate perception was drawn from NSCC's *Comprehensive School Climate Inventory* (CSCI, v. 3.0; Guo & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011) and was included to assess the reliability of community members' perception of school climate and further communicate to community members the importance of their voice to schools. Through acknowledging the importance of school–community partnerships and community members' perspectives, one can mobilize the whole village to support student engagement and learning. This initial version, *Community Scale* (v. 1.0), is a short survey (25 items) that invites community members to record their impressions of their local school climate, the level of school–community partnership, and the extent to which they are interested in learning about school climate evaluation findings and in helping in the school's improvement efforts.

The *Community Scale* was developed to complement and extend the scope of the CSCI, which captures the perceptions on school climate dimensions of students, parents/guardians, and school personnel. The CSCI is a reliable and valid measure of school climate and the only comprehensive school climate survey that has been recognized and recommended in the three current independent reviews of school climate surveys (Clifford et al., 2012; Gangi, 2009; Haggerty et al., 2010). Although the *Community Scale* was designed to be used with the CSCI, it can be used as a stand-alone survey or with any other school climate survey.

Aims of the Study

The main goal of this project was to learn about the process of administering a survey to community members regarding school–community partnerships and school climate through a student engagement/leadership project and the effect of this process on school–community partnerships. We hope to gain a better understanding of community organizations' perceptions of their public schools and their willingness to support school improvement efforts. This paper describes the process, the challenges, and the findings from the *Community Scale* in a small, suburban school district in Connecticut.

The Process

Sample

This pilot study was developed as a collaboration between a small, suburban school district in Connecticut and NSCC. The researchers in this study include a team of three people from NSCC plus six students and one coordinator from the traditional high school.

The school district surveyed serves a population of roughly 7,000 people, the majority of whom are Caucasian. The district comprises residents with diverse income levels as it also has a transient summer population that owns some of the shoreline property. The district includes one public high school (Grades 9–12), as well as an elementary (K–4) and a middle school (5–8). All schools also administered the CSCI (v. 3.0) to parents, staff, and students. The superintendent of the district also provided her assistance to the project.

Capturing the Process

Participating students and the coordinator shared their perceptions of the process through weekly phone calls and emails between the coordinator and the research team. The research team created a list of questions regarding the process to guide the coordinator in describing and improving the process (see Appendix B for process questions for the coordinator). The students created a report for the research team with their thoughts on the process and their suggestions on ways to optimize the process. The research team also met with the students and the coordinator following the completion of the project for a focus group and filmed their reflections on the process.

Coordinator and Student Recruitment

The superintendent for the district selected an educator from the high school to coordinate and lead the *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process*. She selected a teacher who played many roles within the school (e.g., Teen Leadership instructor, social studies teacher, driving instructor, etc.), who was committed to improving school climate, and who had a relationship with parents as well as students. The research team advised the coordinator to recruit as diverse a representation of the student body as possible. Students were recruited from a "Teen Leadership" course that is focused on providing students with skills and training in the areas of personal responsibility, leadership, emotional intelligence, public speaking, and other similar social skills that students need in today's complex environment. Of the students in this course, the coordinator reported that roughly half of the students he discussed the project with agreed to participate. The coordinator limited participants in the project to those who were highly interested to ensure the highest quality of work on the project. In total, six students participated in the project and ranged from 10th to 12th grade levels. As the project began towards the end of the school year, the coordinator made sure to recruit sufficient students who would be available to continue work on the project the following fall. The coordinator shared that the level of student engagement in the project seemed more important than the number of students involved in the project.

Student Orientation and Preparation

The research team provided the coordinator with important points regarding school climate to cover as well as a list of questions that community members might ask students and ways to respond to these questions. The coordinator met with the six participating students and explained the project, school climate, and the scale with them in detail; the process took approximately two hours for each orientation. The coordinator met with one to three students at a time due to challenges in finding a time to meet with all six students at one time. Students then practiced explaining school climate and the project as well as administering the survey to other teachers within the school. Students expressed concern that community members might be unwilling to answer demographic questions. The coordinator and research team prepared them to explain to community members why these demographic questions are included and how and when the personal information will be used. The coordinator also met with the parents of the students to discuss the survey and its purpose and reported that the parents were delighted to see their children involved in this project.

Community Mapping

With the use of planning resources from the research team, the coordinator led students in identifying organizations within their community in specific sectors. The sectors are detailed in the survey in Appendix C and include categories such as business, social services, higher education, faith-based organization, civic organization, and so on. The coordinator found that students were easily able to identify organizations and could identify a personal contact at an organization in every sector. Questions did arise about including organizations outside the town proper but that served the community, organizations that didn't fit neatly into a sector, and community members that were neither parents nor from an identified community organization. In all three instances, the research team and the coordinator decided to include the community members. The research team learned that the definition of community might be more complex than anticipated and that it is important to consider the perceptions and support of citizens who may not be community leaders.

Community Outreach

As there is no single way to best engage people from each organization, the research team suggested multiple methods, such as emailing, cold calling, visits, and enlisting the help of people with contacts within the organization. The superintendent for the district primed community members to be invested in the effort. The coordinator, along with students, also met with the Town

Selectman[2] and asked him to publicize the project to community members. The students and coordinator attended whole community events, like a Memorial Day parade, to reach community members from all sectors at one time. The coordinator and students researched organizations' meeting times and arranged meetings with community members to administer the *Community Scale*, making use of personal contacts within organizations. The majority of outreach was in-person, as they found email and telephone contact having a lower response and engagement rate. Community members that responded were largely Caucasian (77%), had lived in the community for five or more years, and identified as parents, faith-based organization members, public safety officials, and/or members of civic/leisure organizations.

Administration to Community Members

The survey underwent a few revisions during this initial pilot administration process based on feedback from the students. The actual statements and questions within the survey, however, remained consistent for all community members. As for administration, in some instances, students attended community organizations' regularly scheduled meetings. At these meetings they described the project and asked organization members to complete the survey, usually using paper surveys. The survey took approximately 10 minutes for community members to complete, although many organization leaders asked for additional surveys to distribute to their colleagues to complete at their leisure. This led to the addition of short bullet points about the project for the community members to read if they were self-administering the survey. The students reported that many community members did not feel like they knew enough about the schools to answer some questions. This finding led the research team to add the option of selecting "I don't know" as a response to many questions. Students and the coordinator reported that community members were very hesitant to give out contact information. This finding led to the addition of a specific question asking community members if they would like to be contacted. This also led to students learning that they had to be more assertive in asking for this information. The coordinator added, "Familiarity has proven to be a key element. When the community representative knows the student, their family, or me, they have shown an incredible allegiance to the participation of the survey." It took approximately two months to administer the survey to all sectors of the community.

Data Collection

Data was collected on paper or online through the use of an online survey system and tablets. In most cases the data was collected on paper, and students

later entered the responses into the online survey system. Once that was done, the research team could easily update the students on the number of responses by sector of the community.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed manually by the research team using SPSS 20 and MS Excel. Means and response distributions were calculated. The research team provided students with demographic data/graphs and a summary of responses to the survey items. The researchers also provided the coordinator with the school's personnel, parent, and student school climate survey results (*Comprehensive School Climate Inventory* v. 3.0) for the elementary, middle, and high school in the district. Finally, the research team provided the students and the coordinator with suggestions for ways community members could contribute to school climate improvement in various areas of school climate as well as ways to present survey data and next steps to community members through an outline and PowerPoint slides.

Findings

Although these findings only represent the perceptions of community members who responded to the survey in one town, they do show that many community members are willing to respond to surveys about school climate and school–community partnership, and they do show an interest in supporting school climate improvement efforts. In total, 127 community members responded to the survey; 20 community agencies were surveyed. Respondents included all sectors of the community, such as public safety, parent, civic/leisure activities, philanthropic organization, youth leader, higher education, school board, business, elected official, health/mental health, arts, media/entertainment, public library/agencies, faith based, and social services. The largest population of respondents (20%) primarily identified as parents, with the next largest populations being health/mental health (12%) and business (10%).

The data shows that most community members (52%) reported that the school district has "improved somewhat" over the past five years. As for public schools nationally, most community members felt that public schools have either "stayed the same" (34%) or "improved somewhat (37%)." A majority of community members (59%) were interested (i.e., opted "a lot" and "a little"[3]) in supporting school climate improvement efforts. Only 15% of community members were "not at all" or "not really" interested in working with educators and/or students to support the school's improvement efforts. A majority of community members (76%) felt that community members take "a little" or

"a lot" of responsibility for ensuring quality public schools in their community. Finally, most community members (90% responded "a lot" and "a little") would be in favor of students in their school community spending class time on community projects. Only 4% of community members would be "not a lot" or "not at all" in favor of students spending class time on a project in their community.

Community members who were primarily affiliated with higher education were most interested in supporting school improvement efforts, but the majority of community members from the different sectors were interested in supporting school improvement efforts. Three sectors of the community were, on average, "not really" or "not at all" interested in supporting school improvement efforts: elected officials, members of faith-based organizations, and members of social services organizations.

Community members scored the school most positively on having clear rules and norms, in particular on the question, "In our public schools there are clear rules against physically hurting other people (for example, hitting, pushing, or tripping)," and community involvement, such as whether the school works with the community and joins in community activities. Community members scored the school least positively on leadership ability, in particular on the question, "Working relationships among staff in this school make it easier to try new things" and social and civic learning, in particular for the question, "In our public schools, educators talk to students about moral values (for example, responsibility, fairness, and respect)." Please see Appendix C for *Community Scale* v. 1.0 and community members' responses to specific questions to that version. The revised version (*Community Scale* v. 2.0) is available from the authors upon request.

Data Presentation and Utilization

After receiving their in-depth findings from the research team, the students shared this information with the school community and the broader community. The students found that it was more effective to meet with community organizations individually rather than invite all organizations to attend one meeting. They reported that community members appeared to take a potential collaboration with the school more seriously after hearing about their findings. The students also reported that the community members praised the school for their active community involvement. The students' and the community members' ideas for collaborative opportunities between community organizations and the school included creating a calendar with school events to distribute to the community, providing free admission for senior citizens to school events, inviting students for classes at the public library, and organizing student visits

to the businesses to increase awareness of resources and employment opportunities. Through their school, the students attended a training (not led by this research organization) on the National School Climate Standards and presented this information to middle and high school students at their school and at a conference on student leadership. Although community members have not taken concrete steps yet to support school climate improvement, many are interested and are planning to continue working with the school to figure out the best ways to collaborate. In total, the process began in May 2013 and, although an ongoing process, the pilot project was largely completed by December of the same year.

Guide Development

A *Guide for Student and Educational Leaders* was developed (Cohen & Dary, 2012) to provide detailed service learning suggested procedures and strategies that support middle and/or high school students taking the *Community Scale* survey to their community. The research team revised the guide for the coordinator and for the students (Cohen & Dary, 2012) using feedback from the participating students and coordinator. This guide was designed to lay out the steps involved in the process and to offer suggestions as to the best way to carry out the project. The guide (National School Climate Center, 2013) now details how students can be leaders in (a) administering the *Community Scale* to sectors of the community, (b) understanding findings and how they compare with and apply to school climate findings, and (c) meeting with community members to talk about how they can support a school's improvement efforts.

Limitations

Although this scale and process has been developed after thorough research and careful consideration, it has currently only been piloted once. The students and coordinator did not track how many people were asked to take the survey. This was challenging to track, as many times students would meet with a contact person who might then share the survey with others at that organization. Therefore, it was hard for the students to know how many total people were asked to take the survey.

Moreover, the experiences of the coordinator and students during this pilot project are informative, but they do only reflect the experience of one population with the administration and analysis of the *Community Scale*. The school and community surveyed in this study are distinct in several potentially significant ways, and thus their experience might differ from that of other schools

and communities with different unique characteristics. We imagine that differences in urban, suburban, and rural location, size of the district, and school resources and support could all affect the ease of administration of this scale by students. In addition, the *School–Community Partnership Process* does not suggest making it mandatory for community members to take this survey. Therefore, community members who are more invested in supporting schools may be more likely to respond to the survey than community members who are not interested in supporting school improvement, skewing the findings. As the school began this process in the late spring, the process may have taken them longer because there were several months when they were on vacation and not available to work on this project. Finally, there might be other actors in the process (e.g., type of leadership of the school, socioeconomic makeup of the community) that might be influencing both the survey process as well as the findings and might not be true in other cases.

Conclusion and Implications

The *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process* are certainly feasible and informative. Community members are interested in supporting school improvement efforts. Students are capable of administering surveys to community members and find the experience valuable. However, community members' perception of school climate was highly variable and often seemingly influenced by the media. This information and the students' and coordinator's feedback regarding the challenges and successes of the process of administering the *Community Scale* to community members provides valuable information for future iterations of these tools.

The goal of this *Community Scale* and *School–Community Partnership Process* is to strengthen community involvement in schools to in turn improve school climate and student engagement. Community–school partnerships can be developed and strengthened in many ways. The Coalition of Community Schools, for example, focuses on planning that recognizes that district leadership and school-based teamwork are critical for structuring, designing, implementing, evaluating, and continually improving programs of family and community engagement (Epstein et al., 2002). Professional development on partnership program components are provided and tailored to each school improvement plan. Each school's goal-linked *Action Plan for Partnerships* includes family and community involvement activities to help the school and its students meet specific academic goals, behavioral goals (e.g., attendance, behavior, reducing bullying, improving postsecondary planning), and the goal of a welcoming school climate (Epstein et al., 2008).

This project has been quite significant in the sense that it has led to the development of the *Community Scale* as well as the *Guide* for the students and educators. Due to the importance of community–school partnerships, we will continue to enhance this scale in making it a valid and reliable tool. We plan, in further iterations of the *Community Scale*[4], to not only focus the assessment on the extent and ways in which the school and community work together but also ways to continue to share school climate findings with community members. We also suggest that the school and community members brainstorm collaboratively regarding ways for them to work together to support school improvement efforts.

Endnotes

[1]The Council recommends that the terms "climate," "culture," "supportive learning environments," and/or "conditions for learning" be used interchangeably. What is most important is that practitioners and/or researchers use operationally definable terms.

[2]One of a board of officials elected in towns of all New England states except Rhode Island to serve as the chief administrative authority of the town.

[3]Please note that "a little" was used in the sense of "somewhat." The response scale used was: "Not at all," "Not a lot," "neutral/undecided," "a little," and "a lot."

[4]For example, please see *Community Scale* v. 2.0, available from the authors upon request. Although version 1.0 was used for this project, version 2.0 was developed as part of the refinement process after the completion of this project.

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Appendix A: The School Climate Improvement Process Defined*

School climate improvement is an intentional, strategic, collaborative, transparent, and coordinated effort to strengthen school learning environments. Democratically informed decision making constitutes an essential foundation for the school climate improvement process. Based on our members' collective experience partnering with schools, the Council defines an effective school climate improvement process as one that engages all stakeholders in the following six essential practices:

1. The decision-making process is collaborative, democratic, and involves all stakeholders (e.g., school personnel, students, families, community members) with varied roles and perspectives (e.g., teacher, nurse, social worker, administrator, bus driver, secretary, maintenance staff, as well as nontraditional student leaders and disempowered parents).

2. Psychometrically sound quantitative (e.g., survey) and qualitative (e.g., interviews, focus groups) data are used to drive action planning, intervention practices, and program implementation to continuously improve dimensions of school climate. Data are collected regularly to evaluate progress and continue to inform the improvement process.

3. Improvement goals are tailored to the unique needs of the students and broader school community. These goals are integrated into overall school reform/renewal efforts, thereby leveraging school strengths while facilitating the sustainability of the improvement process over time.

4. Capacity building among school personnel promotes adult learning in teams and/or professional learning communities to promote collective efficacy and staff skills in providing whole child education.

5. Curriculum, instruction, student supports, and interventions are based on scientific research and grounded in cognitive, social–emotional, and ecological theories of youth development. Interventions include strength- and risk-based practices and programs that together represent a comprehensive continuum of approaches to promote healthy student development and positive learning environments as well as address individual student barriers to learning.

6. The improvement process strengthens (a) policies and procedures related to learning environments, and (b) operational infrastructure to facilitate data collection, effective planning, implementation, evaluation, and sustainability.

*National School Climate Council, 2012.

Appendix B: Process Questions for Coordinator

For all questions, the reasoning behind the decision and feedback on how it worked would be useful.

Prep
- How did you select students to participate in the project?
  - Did students in class have to participate?
- How old were the students?
- How often did the students meet to work on the project?
- When did the students meet to work on the project?
- Where did the students meet to work on the project?
- Will additional students be recruited for the fall to analyze and present on the data?
- How many students were involved in the project?

Orientation
- Were there any challenges to explaining school climate and the goals of the project to students?
- Did any common questions arise that it would be useful to prepare other educators for?
- Did any students decide to no longer participate after attending the orientation?
- How long did it take to prepare them?

Mapping the community
- How did you identify organizations and community members in each sphere to reach out to?
- What was challenging about identifying community members to reach out to?

Preparing students to go out into the community
- How did students prepare to go out into the community and speak with community members? Role plays? Research on the organization?
- What were students' biggest concerns about going out to the community? How did you address these concerns?

Reaching out to the community
- What size groups did you break them into?
- How did you break students into groups?
- How did you assign groups to community members?
- Did adults accompany the students to go speak with community members?
- Did students provide their own transportation to go speak with community members?
- Were students required to take turns leading the interaction with the community member?
- Did all outreach occur during the assigned project time or did some outreach occur on weekends and other unscheduled time when the students were a part of the community?

- Did students use paper surveys or tablets?
- What was difficult about identifying community members to speak with?
- How many times did you have to reach out to community members before speaking to someone?
- What percentage of community members you spoke with agreed to participate in the survey?
- How did students reach out to community members? Email, phone, in person, etc.
  o If you used email, phones, what line/email did you use? Did you as educator respond to any return emails or phone calls?
- Were any spheres of the community particularly hard to get in touch with?
- What made it easier to reach community members and encourage them to participate? For example, past partnerships with the school, personal connections, etc.
- Were students asked any questions they felt unprepared for?
- Did many students have personal connections to the identified organizations before reaching out to them?
- What spheres were students more or less comfortable reaching out to? Why? How did you support them?

Data collection and input
- Did community members express any confusion or concerns with the questions?
- Were students unsure ever how to input a response?
- If they used a tablet, were there any difficulties with getting the survey to work?

After data collection and input
- How did you wrap up the project with the 12th graders who wouldn't be there to see the project through in the fall?
- What was more challenging than you had expected?
- Is there anything you wish you had done differently? If so, what?
- What would you have liked more information or guidance on?
- How did the process feel time-wise? Did students feel like it was moving too slowly? Did it feel rushed?
- Were there any unexpected outcomes of this project?
- What was challenging for you in letting the students take the lead on this project?
- Where did you see the students struggling the most?
- Where did you see the students really excelling?
- Would you have liked more resources, such as worksheets, activities, etc. to guide sessions with students?

Appendix C: Community Members' Responses to Community Scale v. 1.0

Factor	Question	Question Mean	Factor Mean
Rules and Norms	In our public schools, there are clear rules against physically hurting other people (for example, hitting, pushing, or tripping).	4.20	4.04
Rules and Norms	In our public schools, adults will stop students if they see them physically or verbally hurting others.	3.99	4.04
Rules and Norms	In our public schools, there are clear rules against insults, teasing, harassment, and other verbal abuse.	3.95	4.04
Physical Security	Our public schools are safe.	3.92	3.91
Physical Security	The schools yard and areas around our public schools are safe.	3.91	3.91
Social and Civic Learning	Our public schools intentionally and helpfully work to promote social, emotional, and civic as well as intellectual/academic learning.	3.86	3.85
Social and Civic Learning	In our public schools, students discuss issues that help them think about how to be a good person.	3.88	3.85
Social and Civic Learning	In our public schools, educators talk to students about moral values (for example, responsibility, fairness, and respect).	3.80	3.85
Respect for Diversity	Adults who work in our public schools treat one another with respect.	3.85	3.89
Respect for Diversity	Our public schools teach students to respect differences in others.	3.94	3.89
Respect for Diversity	Adults in our public schools respect differences in students (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	3.97	3.89
Respect for Diversity	Students in our public schools respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	3.79	3.89
School Connectedness & Engagement	I have good relationships with members of the school community.	4.01	3.90
School Connectedness & Engagement	I am a helpful member of the school community.	3.78	3.90
School Connectedness & Engagement	Our public schools have many extracurricular activities/programs that engage a wide range of students.	4.07	3.90

Appendix C, continued

Factor	Question	Question Mean	Factor Mean
School Connectedness & Engagement	Our public schools try to get families and the community to participate in school activities.	3.94	3.90
School Connectedness & Engagement	People are proud to be a part of our public schools' community.	3.89	3.90
Physical Surroundings	Our public schools are kept clean.	4.11	3.90
Physical Surroundings	Our public schools are physically attractive.	4.00	3.90
Physical Surroundings	Our public schools have enough supplies (for example, books, papers, and pencils).	3.58	3.90
Leadership	Adults in our public schools seem to work well with one another.	3.85	3.84
Leadership	Working relationships among staff in this school make it easier to try new things.	3.70	3.84
Leadership	Adults who work in our public schools support one another.	3.96	3.84
Community Involvement	In our public schools, educators are willing to work with the community to support positive youth development.	3.97	3.96
Community Involvement	In our public schools, educators work with the community to support positive youth development.	3.94	3.96
Community Involvement	Our public schools join in community activities.	4.01	3.96

Note: The means for the factors were calculated by averaging the ratings of respondents who did choose to rate how strongly they agreed with the statements within that factor. The scale was 1 - Strongly Disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, and 5 - Strongly Agree.