The "What" & "Why" of School Climate

Part One of a Webinar Series

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Orange County Dept. of Education
Student Mental Health & School Climate Initiative
www.ocde.us/healthyminds

Healthy

Challenged

Safe

Whole Child Approach

Supported

Engaged

ASCD, 2011

Building a Positive School Climate:
A Universal Prevention Effort for All Students

The "What" & "Why" of School Climate

1. What is school climate and school culture?

2. What are characteristics of a positive school climate?

3. What are the impacts of school climate on students & staff?

4. Why should we care about school climate?

What is School Climate?

- **Immediate feel or tone** that is felt or experienced on a **day-to-day** basis by students, staff, and community

- **One of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional program**

- Immediately impacted because of its moment-to-moment nature

(Eller and Eller, 2009, p.3)

Perceptions of Students, Staff, Community

Unwritten rules and traditions

Norms, beliefs, expectations

Way people think, act, dress, treat each other

School culture is a broader and deeper concept. It is the glue that holds the school together. It is the context for learning, teaching, and performance.

Culture: the "stories we tell ourselves."

Jennifer James, urban anthropologist

Stories tell who we are and what we do.

Stories can be used to shape a new culture.

What stories are told about your school by students, staff, parents, and community?

Norms, Values, Expectations, Safety

Modeling & Nurturing Learning

What is a positive school climate?

Engaging and Respectful

Working together on Shared Vision

Cohen and Elias, 2011

Functions of a Strong
Positive School Climate and Culture

- Fostering effort and productivity

- Improving collegiality & collaboration to promote better communication and problem solving

- Supporting successful change and improvement efforts

- Amplifying energy and motivation of staff and students

- Building commitment & helping students & teacher identify with the school

- Focusing attention & daily behavior on what is important and valued

Deal and Peterson

A Social-Ecological Perspective

Communities

Families

Adults at School

Students
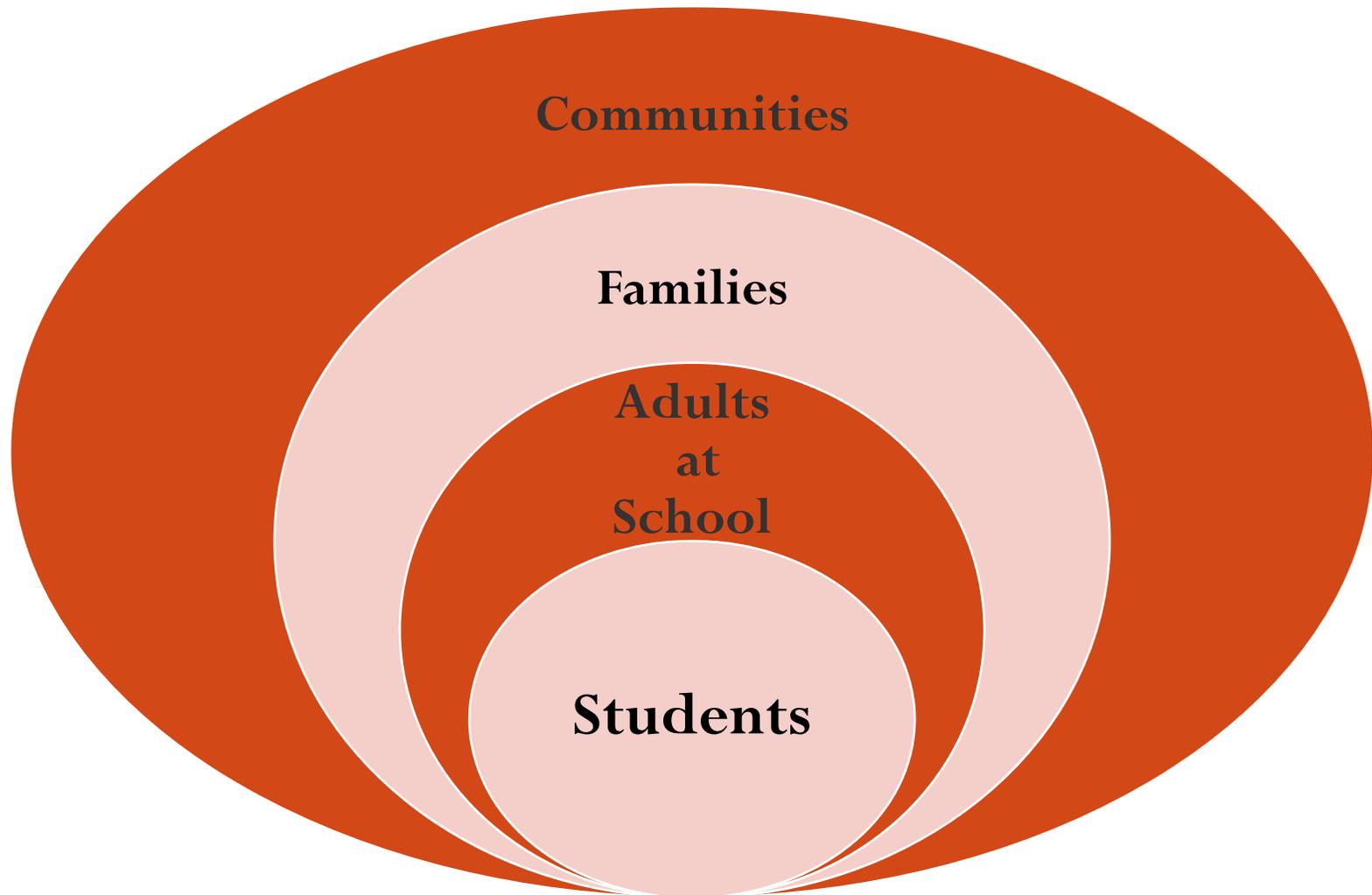
School Climate Is about the Perceptions of All Stakeholders

The Context for Learning
& Social Emotional Growth

Safety & Health

-Social
-Emotional
-Physical

Psychology of Achievement

Interpersonal Relationships

- Diversity

- Social Support

Leadership & Adult Relationships

Teaching & Learning Support

School Connectedness & Physical Surroundings

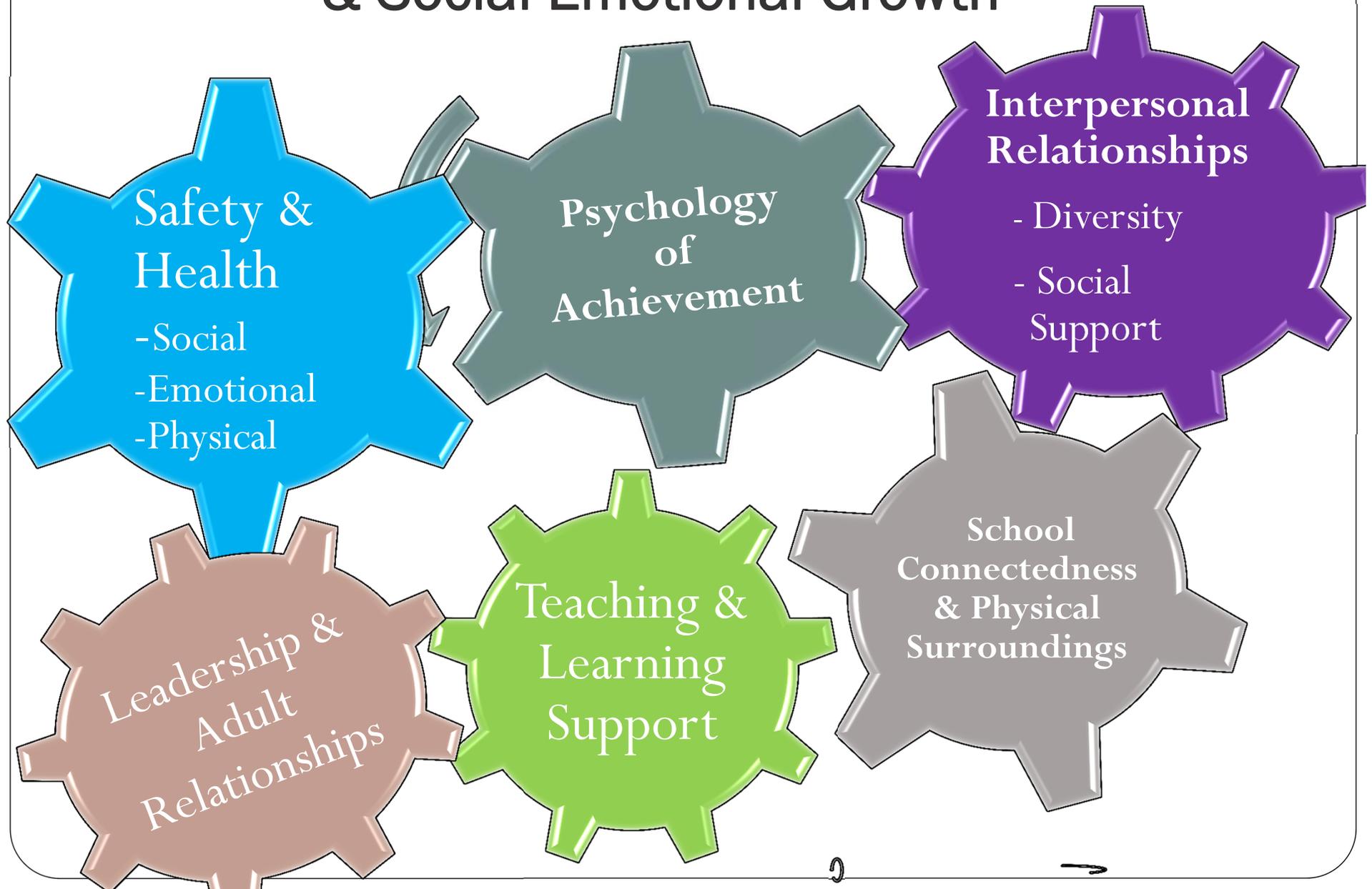# School Climate: A Multidimensional Concept

Safety
- Norms and Rules
- Physical, Social & Emotional Security
- Cyberbullying

Teaching & Learning
- Support For Learning
- Social-Emotional & Civic Learning

Relationships
- Respect For Diversity
- Social Support Student to Adult
- Social Support Student to Student
- Social Support Adult to Adult

Institutional Environment
- School Connectedness
- Physical Surroundings

Mental Health Domains

Stress-Anxiety
- Physical, cognitive, social, emotional & behavioral symptoms

Depression
- Physical, cognitive, emotional & behavioral symptoms

OCDE 2013

National School Climate Standards

BENCHMARKS TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE TEACHING, LEARNING AND COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE COUNCIL

Impacts of School Climate on Students

Motivation to learn

Learning &
academic
achievement

Respect and mutual trust

Group cohesion

Victimization
& delinquency

Feelings of
safety &
threat

Feelings of connectedness
and attachment to school

Absenteeism
& suspension

Emotional & mental health

Student Emotional Health
& School Climate

- Early onset of mental health issues
  (1/2 of adult mental illness by age 14)

- School climate accounts for some challenges to students' adaptive capacities and the shaping of their social-emotional development

- In middle school, students' declining perceptions about their school associated with psychological and behavioral adjustments

- School can be a risk or protective factor for prevention of student mental and emotional health issues
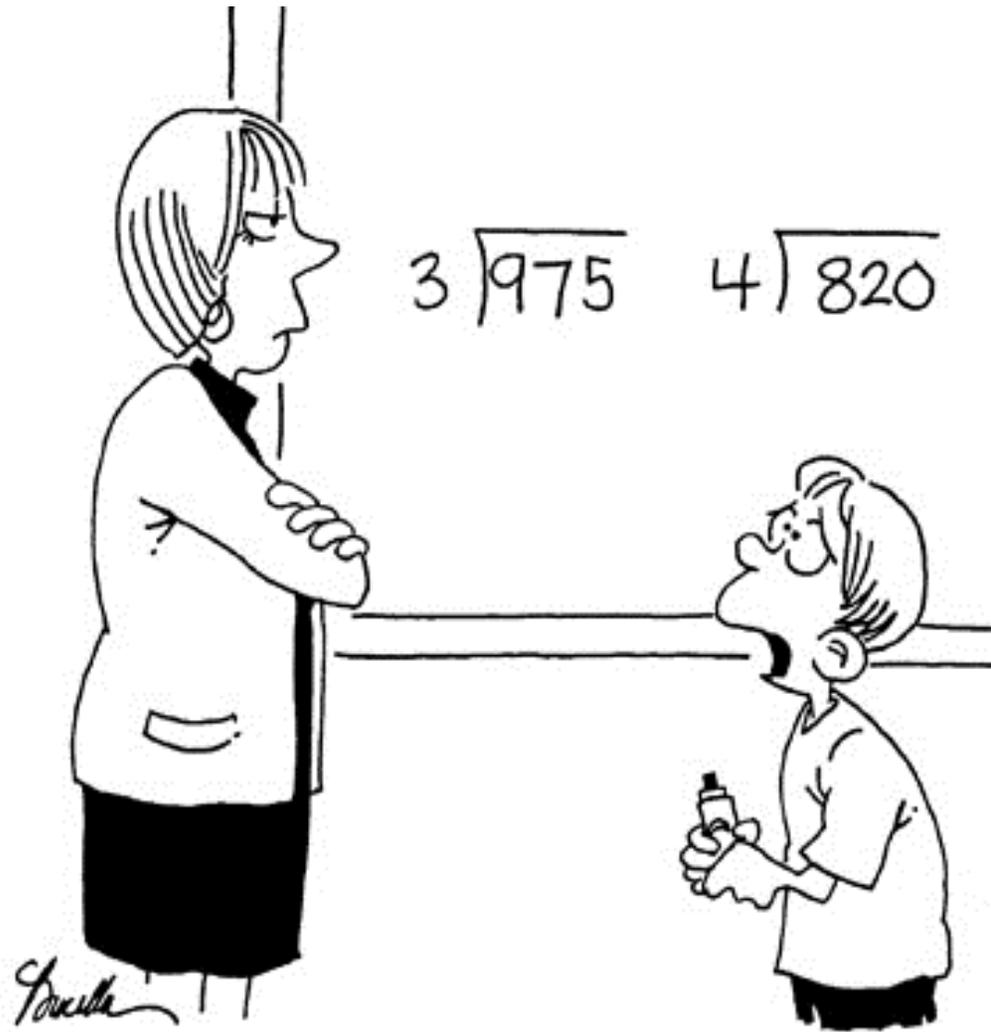
School-related stress is the most prevalent, untreated cause of academic failure in our schools. It may afflict 6-10 million children a year.

Barker 1987

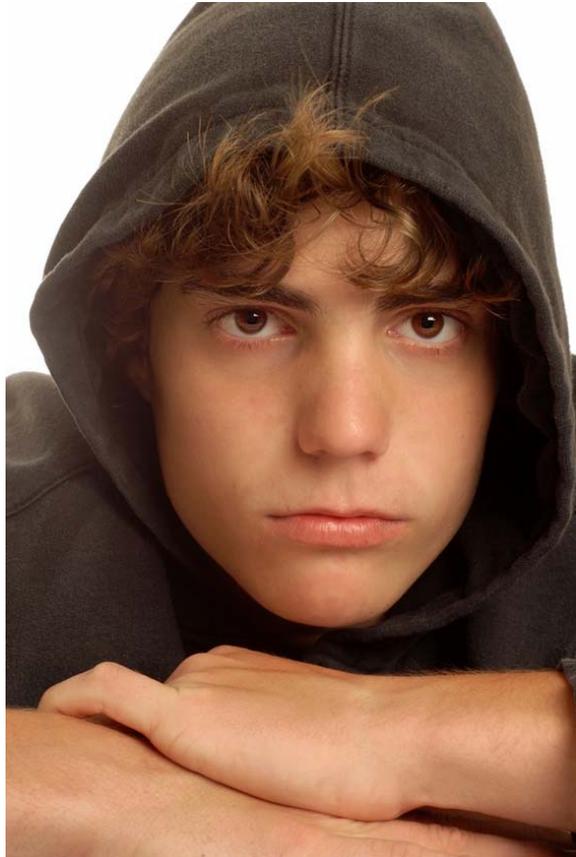Distress is linked to more than 50% of all absences and the cause in 17%.
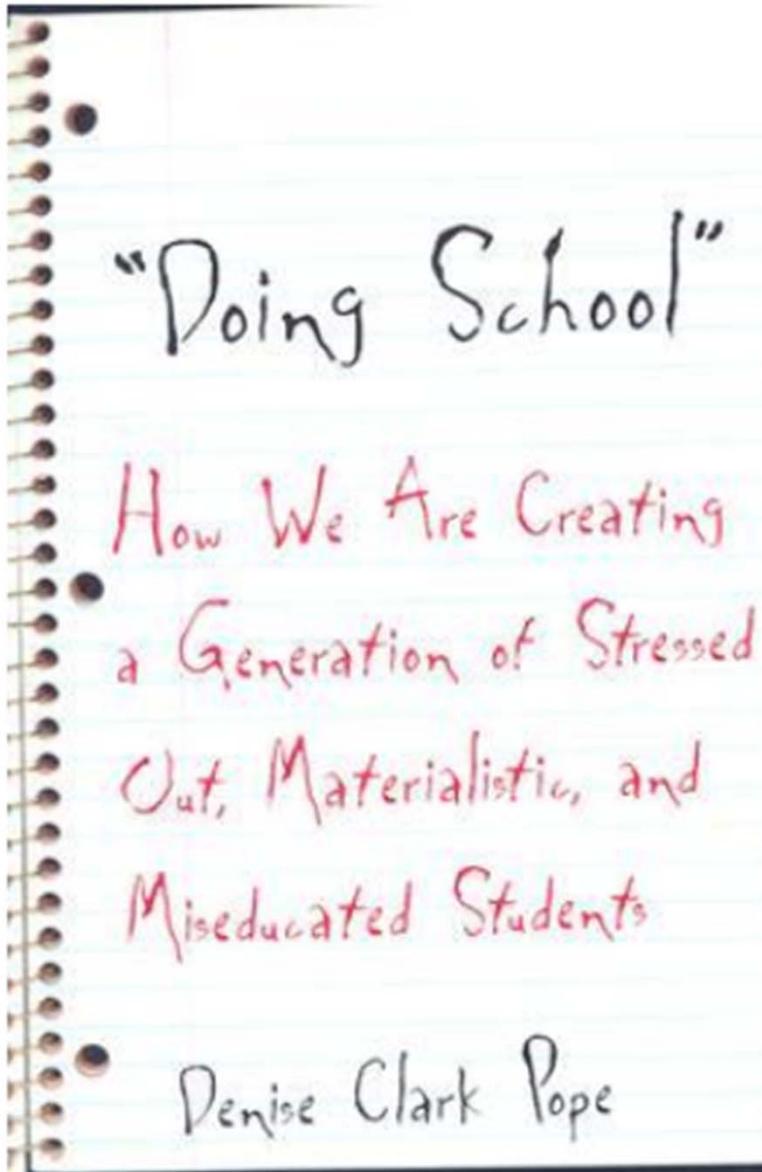
Johnston-Brooks, et al. 1998

"Is there some place I can sign up for a 'do not call on me' list?"

School-Related Stressors

- Bus rides
- Hallways, locker hassles
- Bullying and harassment
- Time or performance deadlines
- Teachers who embarrass or badger
- Fear of punishment
- Language difficulties
- Hyper competition
- Testing

"Doing School"

How We Are Creating a Generation of Stressed Out, Materialistic, and Miseducated Students
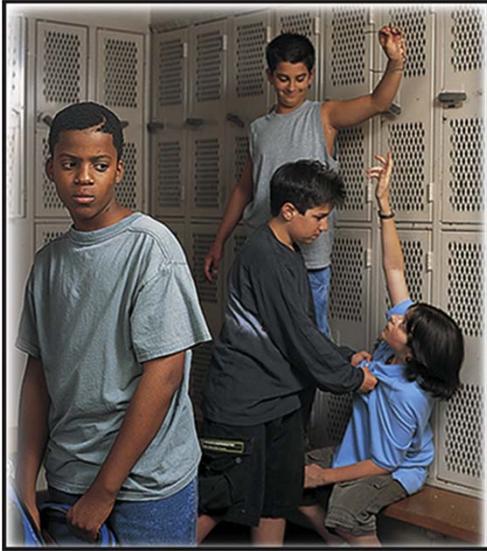
Denise Clark Pope

Stanford University SOS Project (Stressed Out Students)

Re-examining middle and high school norms and practices, such as:
- Workloads
- Homework policy
- Student mental health supports- stress reduction, yoga
- School start time
- Nutrition
- Supportive advisory system
- Authentic learning with more student voice

Is School a Risk or Protective Factor?

Persistent acts of aggression (physical or relational) between students, when ignored, create a social norm that will eventually undermine the perceived safety and school climate for ALL members of the school community, including children who are not directly involved, as well as staff and family members.

Austin & O'Malley 2012

Risk
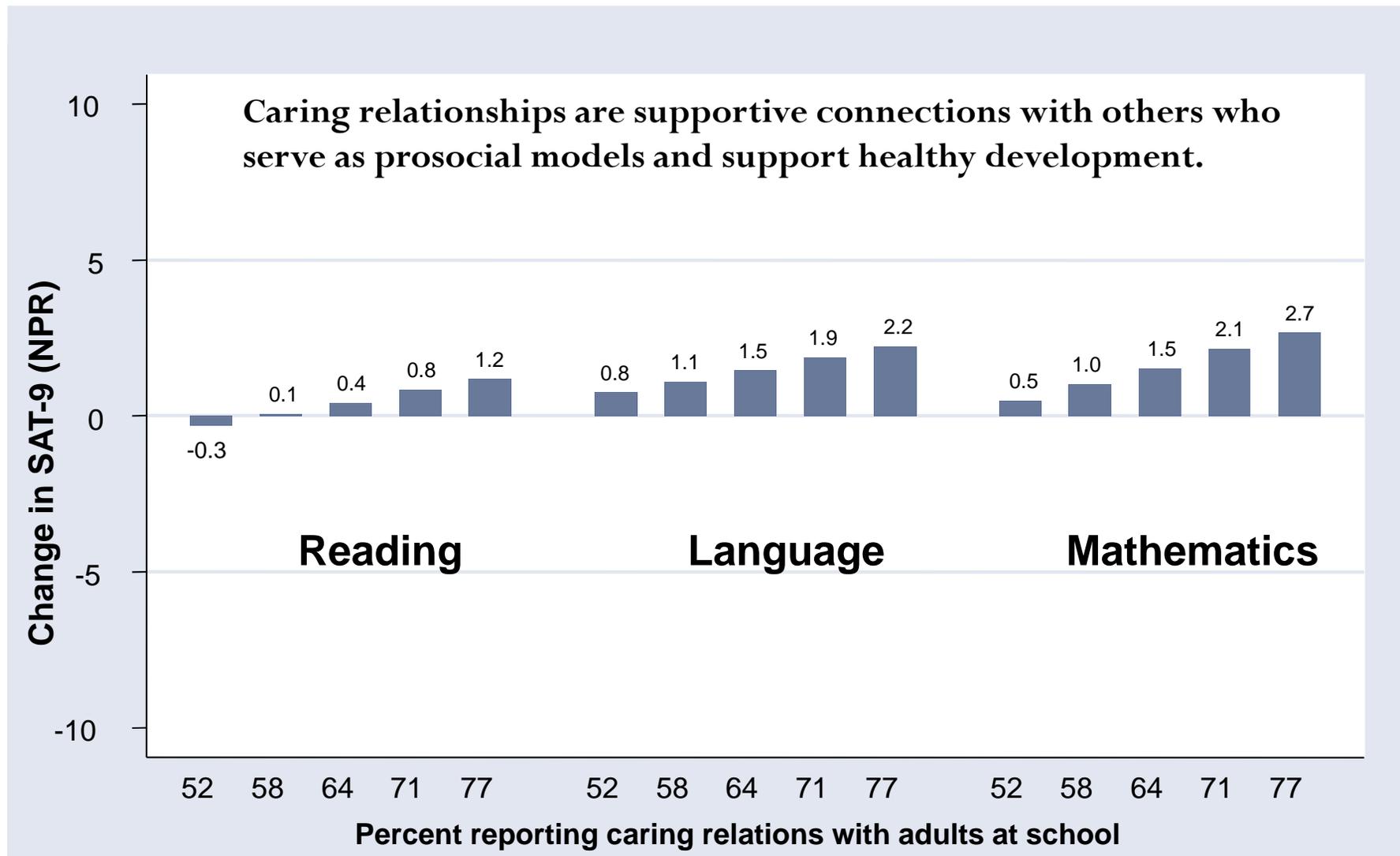
- Lack of connection
- Lack of safety
- Teasing, bullying, gangs
- Negative relationships with adults and peers
- Uncaring interactions
- Low expectations
- Academic disengagement
- Academic frustration
- Poor role models
- School-driven Mobility
- Reactive punitive approaches to discipline
- Lack of access to necessary services

David Osher, 2012

Protection

- Connection
- Safety
- Positive Relationships With Adults And Peers
- Caring Interactions
- Academic Challenges
- Academic Support
- Academic Engagement
- Positive Role Modeling
- Social Emotional Learning
- Positive Behavioral Supports
- Consistent, restorative discipline
- Access to Needed Services And Supports

David Osher, 2012

School Caring Relationships and <u>Annual Changes</u> in Test Scores

Caring relationships are supportive connections with others who serve as prosocial models and support healthy development.

Reading — Language — Mathematics

Change in SAT-9 (NPR)

Reading: -0.3, 0.1, 0.4, 0.8, 1.2
Language: 0.8, 1.1, 1.5, 1.9, 2.2
Mathematics: 0.5, 1.0, 1.5, 2.1, 2.7

52 58 64 71 77 | 52 58 64 71 77 | 52 58 64 71 77

Percent reporting caring relations with adults at school

Source: California Healthy Kids Survey & 1998-2002 STAR data files Gr. 7, 9, 11 Data from 600 schools

School Climate and Academic Achievement

School Climate(SCAI)/Student Achievement (API)

SCAI School Climate Assessment Instrument
CA API California Academic Performance Index
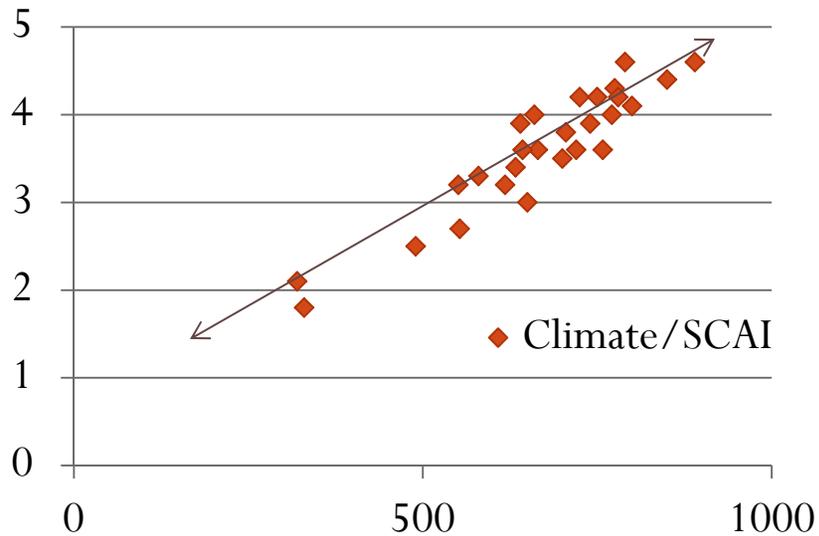
Highly successful schools have a "psychology of success" that pervades every aspect of the school.

Schindler 2010

Core of a Sound and Healthy School Climate

Psychology of Achievement	
Success Psychology	Failure Psychology
Internal locus of control	External locus of control
Belonging and acceptance	Alienation and worthlessness
Mastery (growth) mindset	Helpless (fixed) mindset

Mindset the New Psychology of Success by Dweck, 2006; Shindler, 2010

Impacts of School Climate on Staff

|		
Ability to make change	Successful implementation of programs	Relationships and trust
Emotional exhaustion	Attrition and retention	Feelings of accomplishment
Commitment to profession	Depersonalization	Teachers' efficacy-- belief they can positively affect student learning

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If the basic school structure is dysfunctional, its capacity to promote desired goals is limited.

Fullan 2003

Lessons from Race to the Top Efforts
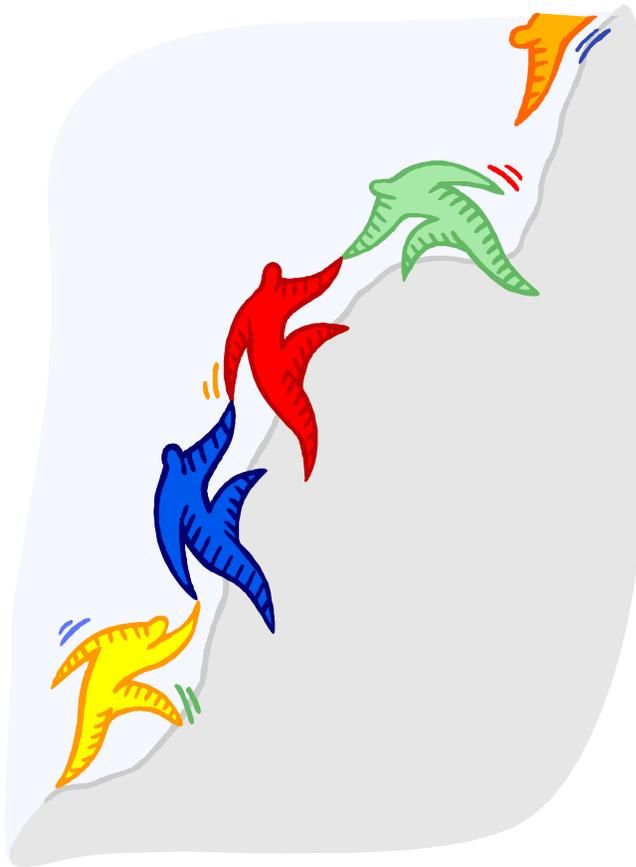
Positive school culture is both an **outcome** and a necessary **context** for implementation success.

Weiss, 2013

School Improvement & School Climate
A Multi-year Chicago Study (Byrk 2010)

Four systems interact:

- Professional capacity

- School learning climate (order, safety, norms)

- Parent-school-community ties

- Instructional guidance

**RELATIONAL TRUST
coordinates and supports these processes.**

School
Climate

PBIS
Efforts &
Outcomes

Deal and Peterson 1999; Bradshaw et al, 2009
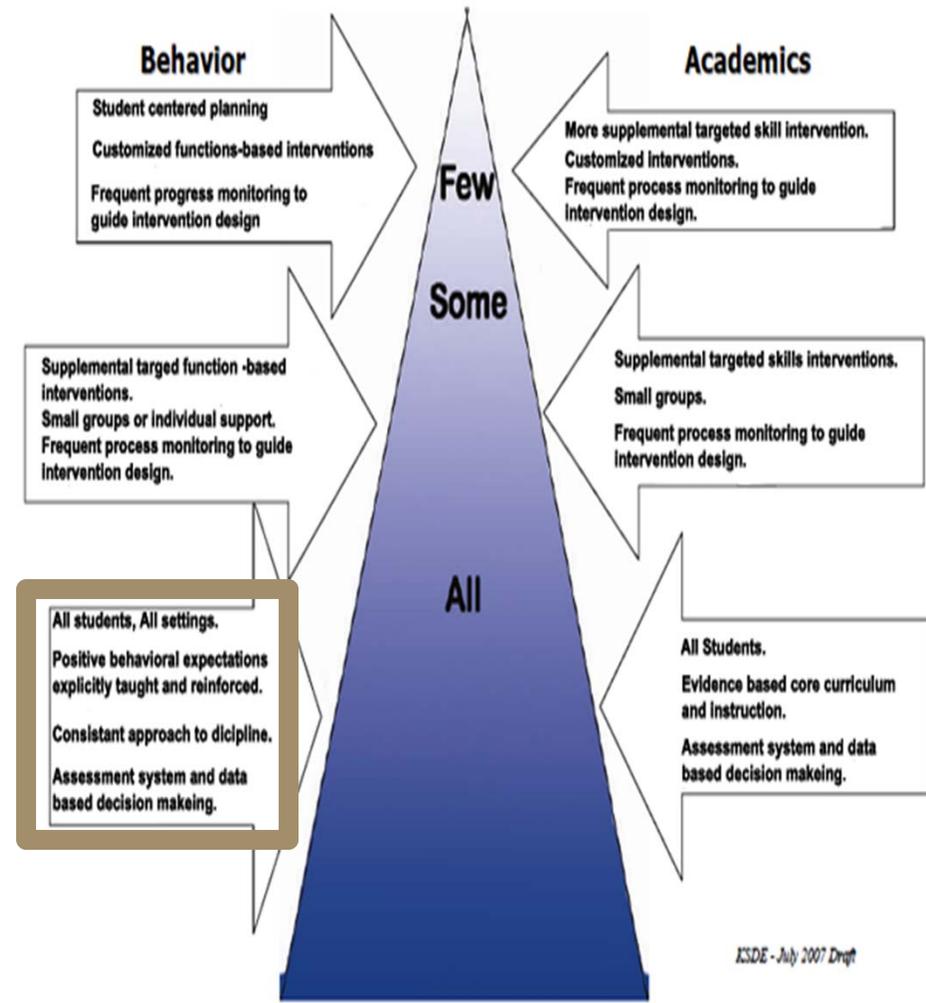
School Climate & Safety

The U.S. Secret Service and Dept. of Justice studies cite positive school climate as an important factor in reducing school shootings and school violence.

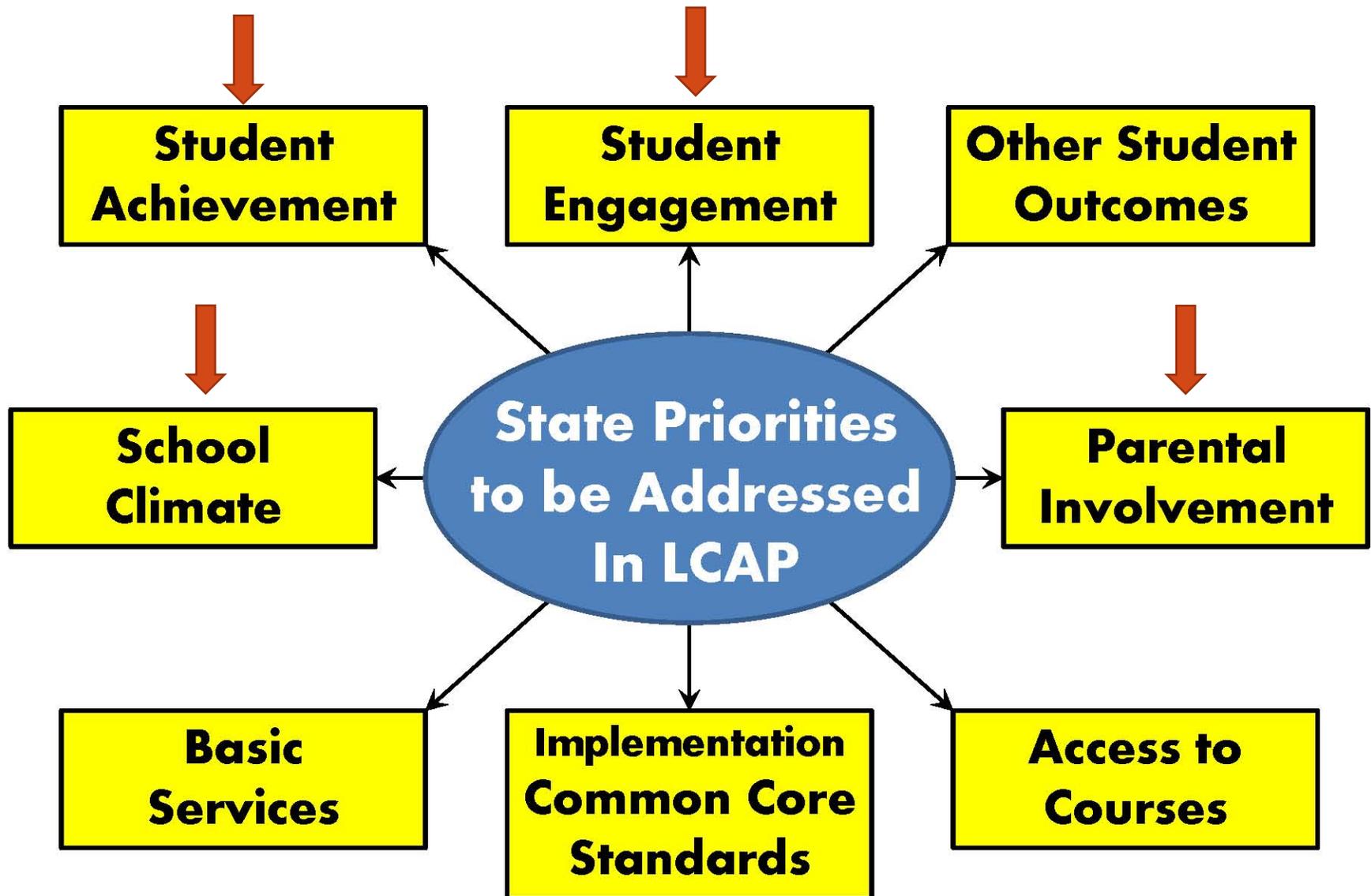(Espelage & Swearer, 2003; Cornell, 2003; Peterson, Larson & Skiba, 2002).

School Climate, Safety & Behavioral Support Systems

Schools in which rules are effectively enforced (i.e. better discipline management) have lower rates of student victimization and student delinquency

(Gottfredson, et al., 2005).

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Behavior

Student centered planning

Customized functions-based interventions

Frequent progress monitoring to guide intervention design

Supplemental targed function -based interventions.
Small groups or individual support.
Frequent process monitoring to guide intervention design.

All students, All settings.

Positive behavioral expectations explicitly taught and reinforced.

Consistant approach to dicipline.

Assessment system and data based decision making.

Academics

More supplemental targeted skill intervention.
Customized interventions.
Frequent process monitoring to guide intervention design.

Supplemental targeted skills interventions.
Small groups.
Frequent process monitoring to guide intervention design.

All Students.
Evidence based core curriculum and instruction.
Assessment system and data based decision making.

Few

Some

All

KSDE - July 2007 Draft

Kansas Dept. of Education

Local Control Accountability Plans

Student Achievement	Student Engagement	Other Student Outcomes
School Climate	**State Priorities to be Addressed In LCAP**	Parental Involvement
Basic Services	Implementation Common Core Standards	Access to Courses

School Safety Plans and Positive School Climate

- Effective prevention & intervention programs and strategies are being used consistently to create a safe and drug-free learning environment and to address school safety and violence prevention.

- AB 1271 effective January 2015: Prioritize mental health and intervention services, restorative practices, and positive behavior interventions and supports.

  Calif. Dept. of Education

Creating a Positive Climate & Caring School Community

- Engages students in learning

- Develops and models caring relationships

- Increases prosocial skills

- Decreases aggressive and at-risk behaviors

- Improves academic achievement

- Increases graduation rates

- Decreases teacher turnover

- Increases teacher satisfaction

- Turns around low-performing schools

Gardner 1991, Noddings 1992, Sergiovanni 1994, Berkowitz & Bier 2003; Osher 2012 and others

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OCDE > Student Mental Health Matters > School Climate Matters

School Climate Matters

"School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflect relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures." (National

What Is a Positive School Climate?

- Norms, values, and expectations make students and adults socially, emotionally, i
- All school community members are engaged and respected.
- Students, families, and educators work together to achieve shared school vision.
- Educators model and nurture an attitude emphasizing the benefits of and satisfaction from learning.
- Each person contributes to school operations and the care of the physical environment.
- Visitors to the school feel welcomed. (Cohen and Elias, 2011)

Why Should We Care About School Climate?

A positive school climate and supportive conditions for learning can:

- Impact learning and boost academic achievement thus closing gaps
- Increase graduation rates
- Decrease teacher turnover
- Increase teacher satisfaction
  Turn around low-performing schools (Osher,2012)

School Climate Resources

- ◦ **Articles and Research**
- ◦ **Presentations**
- ◦ **Other Tools and Websites**

Articles and Research

2012 School Climate Research Summary
Produced by the National School Climate Center.

Opportunities for Meaningful Particpation in Schools
Students' well being and academic success differs according to the level of opportun
opportunities for participation positively correlates with academic performance, stud
perception of school safety.

School Climate and Academic Performance across California High Schools
The School Climate Index (SCI) has a direct relationship to the Academic Performan
increases as well.

School Climate and Mental Health
A summary of literature that suggests that school climate can impact student learning
development.

School Climate Research Gist List
A brief collection of school climate research facts in relation to safety, teaching and
and school improvement.

School Climate Matters
A two-page brief article describing the research.

Supporting Teachers Is Part of Positive School Climate
Effective learning conditions for students must begin with effective working condition

Teacher Support: High Expectations and Caring Relationships
Caring relationships and high expectations improves a students academic success,
perception of school safety.

Presentations

Bullying and School Climate (Archived Webinar)
A 28-minute webinar addressing the school factors that can either facilitate bullying
practices that prevent and reduce bullying on campus. Also at this site are webinars
administrative considerations about bullying.

www.ocde.us/healthyminds

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Thank you.
Your feedback is important.

Open up your chat box and click
on the link to take you to the webinar survey.

Thank you.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GMTT2X8

If you are viewing on a tablet
please copy the link in the chat box and
paste it into your web browser.