

Best Practices for Improving School Climate

Part Three of a Webinar Series

Presented by Lucy Vezzuto, Ph.D.

Orange County Dept. of Education
Student Mental Health & School Climate Initiative

www.ocde.us/healthyminds



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

For Webinar Series Archive go to: ocde.us/healthyminds Click on “School Climate Matters”



School Climate Webinar Series

*What is school climate?
How does it impact students and staff?
How can school climate be measured?
How can the data be used for decision making?
What are best practices to improve school climate?*

Supports LCAP Priorities
of Student Achievement,
Student Engagement &
School Climate

This new webinar series will address these questions and more. This series can inform a school district's Local Control and Accountability Plan and a school's efforts to foster a safe, supportive, challenging and engaging environment for students' academic achievement and social-emotional development.

Sign up for the whole series or select the webinar that meets your need.

November 6, 2014

The “What” and “Why” of School Climate

Registration Links

<http://ocde.k12oms.org/1250-88861>

November 13, 2014

Measuring School Climate & Using the Data

<http://ocde.k12oms.org/1250-88890>

November 20, 2014

Best Practices for Improving School Climate

<http://ocde.k12oms.org/1250-88893>

3.30 – 4.30 p.m.

No Cost



Presenter: Lucy Vezzuto, Ph.D., Orange County Dept. of Education

For registration questions, please contact Paula Bartlett
at 714.966.4427 or pbartlett@ocde.us
www.ocde.us/healthyminds



WELLNESS - RECOVERY - RESILIENCE



The California Mental Health Services Authority (CaMHSA) is an organization of county governments working to improve mental health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Prevention and Early Intervention programs implemented by CaMHSA are funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop 63). Prop. 63 provides the funding and framework needed to expand mental health services to previously underserved populations and all of California's diverse communities.



CCSEA
California County Superintendents
Educational Services Association



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School Climate Matters

"School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures." (National School Climate Council, 2007, p.4)



What Is a Positive School Climate?

Norms, values, and expectations make students and adults socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically safe. 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 Eilas 2011)

Why Should We Care About School Climate?

School climate may be the missing link in promoting school reform and closing the achievement gap (Schindler 2010). Studies have clearly shown that schools with a positive school climate have higher academic achievement (Cohen, 2009; Schindler 2010; NSCC 2012). And when considering the whole learner, school climate impacts a variety of factors that influence learning such as students' emotional health, feelings of safety, attendance, relationships, and motivation. 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 Participation in Schools](#)

Students' well being and academic success differs according to the level of opportunities for student participation. Increased



[National School Climate Standards](#)

ocde.us/healthyminds

Best Practices for Improving School Climate

Webinar 3

- What is an effective process for improving school climate?
- What are some best practice guidelines for planning and implementing action?
- What practices and programs have evidence or promise of improving school climate?

Beyond Compliance



The quality of a school's climate goes far beyond “getting the kids to behave” and “comply” with adults demands. In schools that have a positive climate, there is a purposeful vision and systematic mission to link positive school climate and learning. Teachers and students are partners in creating a school culture that values each individual, engages all in learning, and actively supports the success of every member of the community.... Everyone—adults and students—is an active agent of fairness, social justice, and change.



Preble and Gordon, p 3, 2011

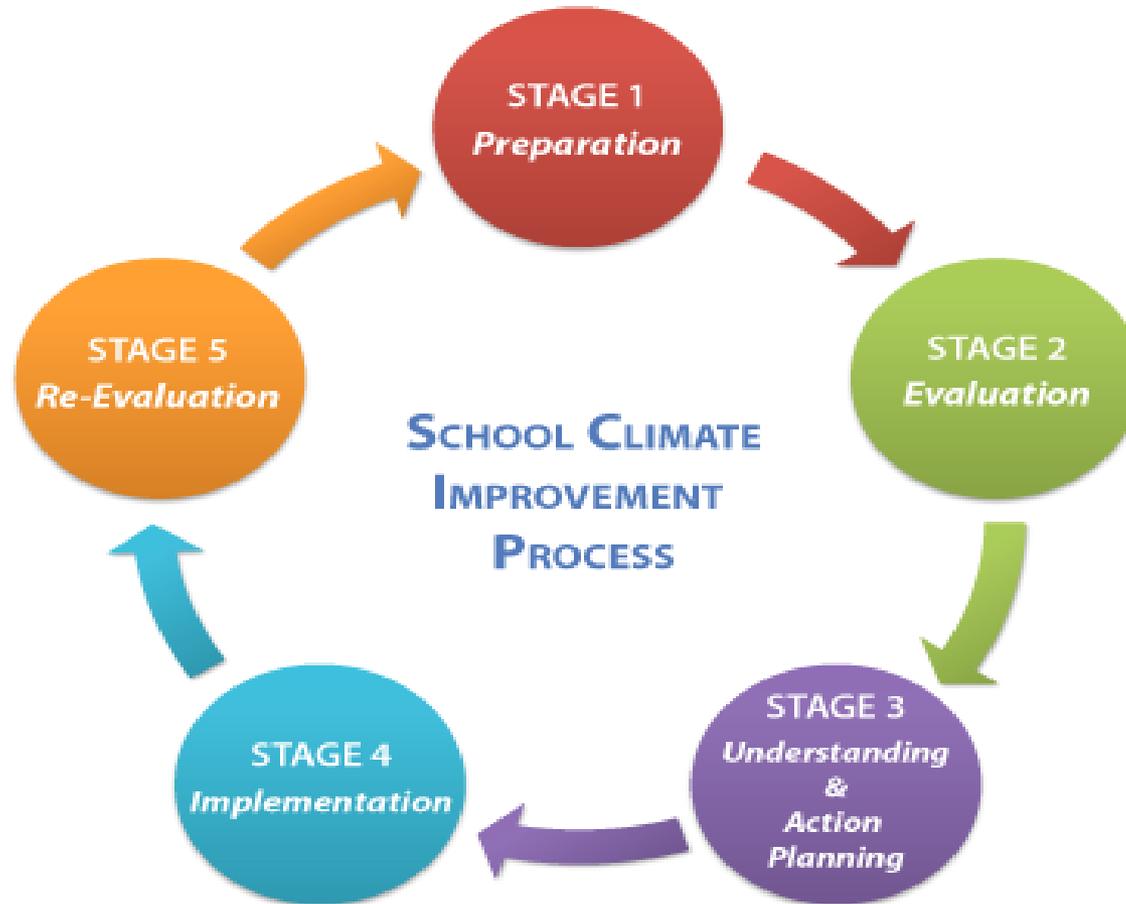
Beyond Piecemeal Problem Solving



Beyond Top-Down Reform



The Process IS an Effective Practice

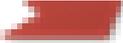


It isn't just 'what' you do but 'how' you do it.



STAGE 1
Preparation

- Team of interested school community members
- Ask: what kind of school do we have now; what kind of school do we want?
- Establish ‘no faulty’ framework
- Identify successes and build on past efforts




STAGE 2
Evaluation

- Survey students, staff and parents
- Examine relationships, teaching and learning, student voice and engagement, safety, school physical environment

Example of Actionable Framework: Engagement

Relationships

- **Measure:** Ask students and teachers whether their relationships with students and teachers are caring
- **Action:** Ensure teachers know students names and interests; each student is connected with caring adult.

Respect for Diversity

- **Measure:** Ask parents if they feel school welcomes families like them; ask students if they experience disrespect from adults due to race, ethnicity, or culture.
- **Action:** identify and address discipline disparities; address ways to welcome all families

School Participation (connectedness)

- **Measure:** Ask students whether they participate in extracurricular activities; ask students if they are invited to contribute to making school a better place
- **Action:** Ensure all students are invited and can participate in extracurricular activities; ask students how to solve school problems



STAGE 3
*Understanding
&
Action
Planning*

- Examine findings in light of school visioning process
- Involve students, staff & parents in data dialogues and change project
- Prioritize short- and long-term goals
- Learn about research-based best practices, processes, and programs to help meet goals
- Develop an action plan



STAGE 4
Implementation

- Identify and provide professional development needed.
- Coordinate teaching practices & systemic efforts to
a) promote students' social-emotional-cognitive-civic competencies and b) improve climate towards a safe, caring, participatory, responsive school community
- Monitor instructional and school-wide improvement efforts
- Document and share successes and challenges
- Use info for next short- and long-term steps

A large orange circle with a smaller orange triangle pointing downwards from its top edge, positioned at the top center of the slide.

STAGE 5 *Re-Evaluation*

- Determine “what” has changed and “how’ using formal (survey) and informal assessments
- Reevaluate schools’ strengths and challenges; update plan
- Plan for continuing professional development and networking to keep staff motivated and invigorated.

Action Planning: Where Change Begins

Positive school climate is about demonstrating through actions that each child matters, that learning is about engaging experiences, and that positive relationships are central to the smooth functioning of schools.

- Creates energy
- Inspires commitment
- Motivates further action





**One Best Solution or Action
To Improve School Climate**

Action Planning: Lesson 1



- Energy and resources in schools are finite when we rely exclusively on the adults working in schools. By including students as leaders, we vastly expand the resources available to action planning

Action Planning: Lesson 2



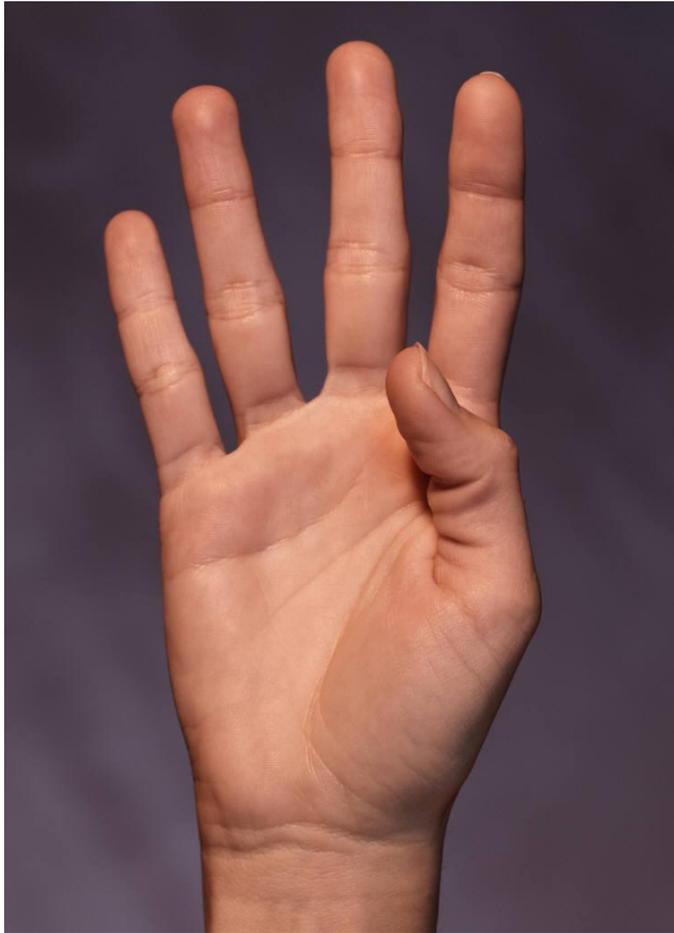
- Kids know best (or at least need to be listened to). Adults in schools can spend hours coming up with ideas that they think might be effective. Including students in the conversation almost always results in better ideas.

Action Planning: Lesson 3



- Actions should be related directly to need. Too often, schools jump at a new program that sounds good or is convenient without first identifying the problem that they seek to address. Start with school climate data to identify goals that then lead to action projects.

Action Planning: Lesson 4



- Stop looking for the “one right way”. What works for one person may not work for another. A combination of small and larger actions tend to be more effective in reaching more students and teachers, generating ongoing energy for change, and developing the culture in schools where adults and kids work together to continually improve school climate.

Action Planning: Lesson 5



- Use a multi-tiered approach. Basing school wide practices on the most needy 5% can be oppressive for the majority. Likewise, thinking what works for the vast majority should work for all students is unrealistic.

Using Respect Continuum as a Guide to Action

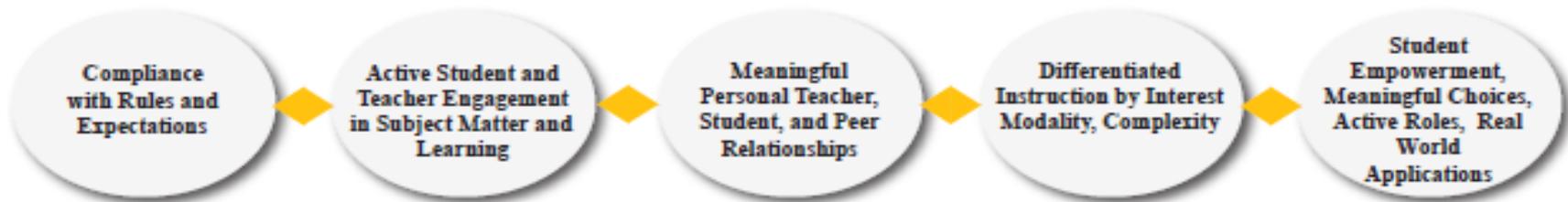
From Violence to Empowerment: A Respect Continuum

© W.K. Preble, Ed.D., 2008

Disrespect in Schools



Respect in Schools



Action Planning Ideas

Goal Area: Respect Among Students

	Small Project Ideas	Medium Project Ideas	Large Project Ideas
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include more activities to introduce students to peers • Encourage students to hang out or eat lunch with student they don't know • Hang posters around school relating to diversity and respect. • Select a school theme or slogan focused on improving respect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate special behavior days/weeks (e.g. Thank-Others Day, Random-Acts-of-Kindness Week) • Hold outside-of-class, all-school (or all grades) events such as Mountain Day or College Visit Day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data on relationships use to measure weekly or monthly progress. • Take on a project where student find and communicate with a sister school in an impoverished or otherwise quite different environment Have students study the culture and geography of the area, and initiate weekly Skype meetings with students at that school. This could lead to exchange visits between schools.

More Action Planning & Implementation Ideas

- Start with quick changes that are highly visible to all students and staff
- Prioritize: what is most agreed upon? What would take a minimal investment and time?
- Welcome and value individual contributions and participation
- Nurture environment of collegiality, collaborative planning, experimentation and evaluation
- Communicate your messages



Strengthen School as a Protective Factor

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



Best Practices for Improving School Climate

Webinar 3

- What is an effective process for improving school climate?
- What are some best practice guidelines for planning and implementing action?
- **What practices and programs have evidence or show promise for improving school climate?**



Guiding Principles

A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline

U.S. Department of Education

Principle 1: Climate and Prevention

Schools that foster positive school climates can help to engage all student in learning by preventing problem behaviors and intervening effectively to support struggling and at-risk students.

Principle 2: Expectations & Consequences

Schools that have discipline polices or codes of conduct with clear, appropriate, and consistently applied expectations and consequences will help students improve behavior, increase engagement and boost achievement.

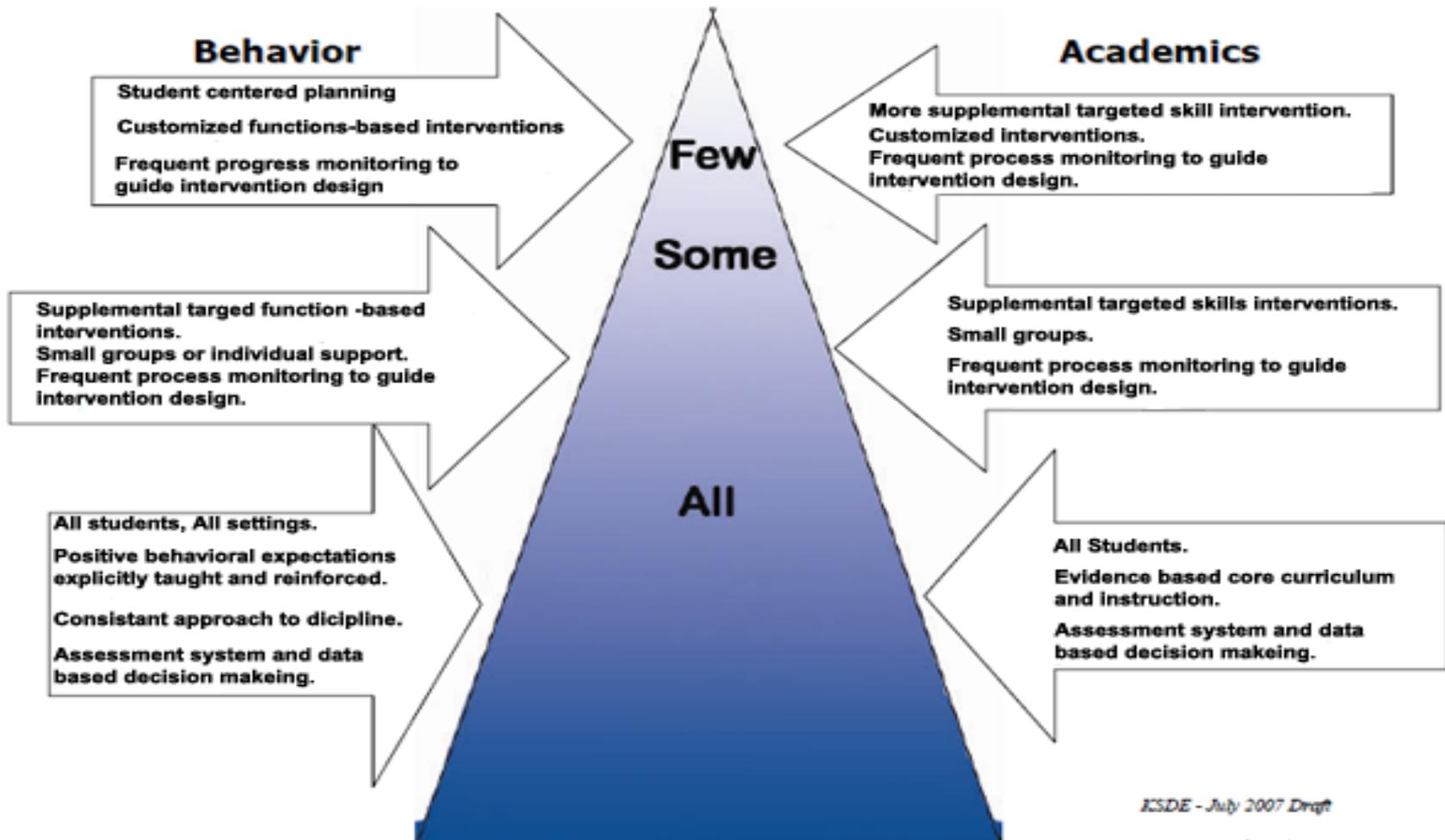
Principle 3: Equity & Continuous Improvement

Schools that build staff capacity and continuously evaluate the school's discipline policies & practices are more likely to ensure fairness and equity and promote achievement for all students.

Prevention & Interventions

Tiered Behavioral & Academic Supports

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)



KSDE - July 2007 Draft

Promising Practice

Restorative Practices- A Continuum

Doing things **WITH**
kids rather than **TO**
them or **FOR** them

● Formal restorative conference
Resolve conflicts & harm

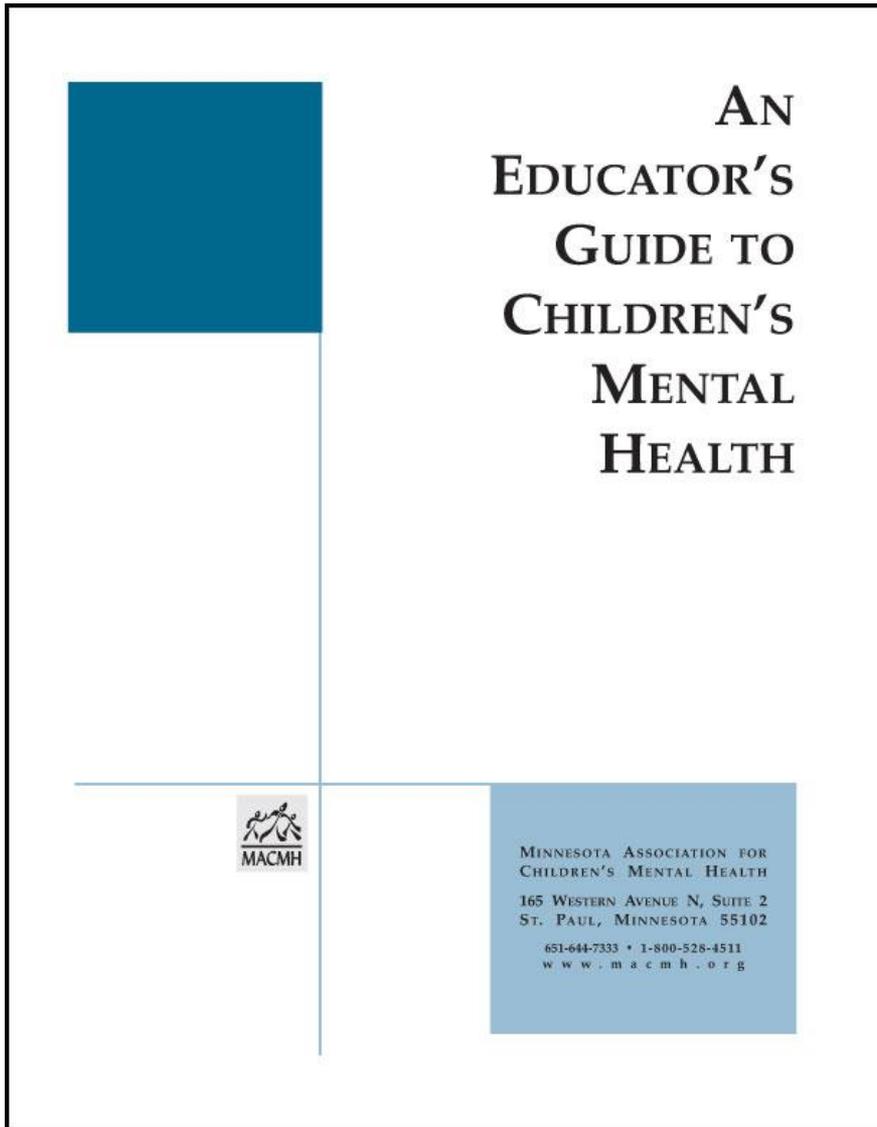
● Impromptu conferences
● Problem-solving & intervention specific circles

Community & Relationships

● Community Building Circles (students & staff)
● Affective Questions
● Affective Statements

Student Mental Health

- Signs & Symptoms
- Bridge to Resources
- Classroom Supports
- Trauma informed



Intentional Teaching of Social and Emotional Competencies

For All Students

Five core competencies:

Recognize one's emotions, values, strengths, and limitations

Evidence-based Practice

Manage emotions and behaviors to achieve one's goals



Make ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behavior

Show understanding and empathy for others

Form positive relationships, work in teams, deal effectively with conflict

Credit: CASEL

CASEL

Best Practices: Building Community

- Class meetings-getting to know classmates, social skills, checking in, decision making, problem solving
- Student participation in rule development
- Cooperative learning structures
- Cross-age buddies
- Adult & Peer Mentoring
- School-wide activities



An Evidence-based Practice

Caring Adult - Student Relationships



About 1/3 of CA secondary students do NOT experience high levels of caring adult relationships or high expectations

WestEd 2012

Reduced bullying behaviors ~ Increased motivation

Stronger bonding to school ~ Fewer behavioral problems

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

Internal Locus of Control

Personal Empowerment



Our destiny is in our own hands

How does it happen?

- Making choices
- Taking responsibility for our choices
- Taking on responsible tasks
- Exercising leadership
- Contributing ideas
- Having a purpose & feeling connected

More significant
predictor of
achievement than
intelligence or SES

What does it lead to?

- Higher levels of achievement
- Less perceived stress
- More openness to learning

Mindset

The expectations we process about ourselves and others that impacts our motivation and guides our behavior.

Growth or Fixed Orientation?

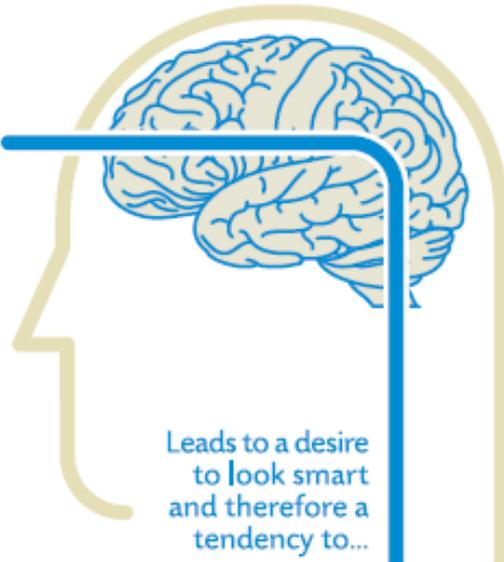
What's Your Mindset?

Agree or Disagree?

1. You have a certain amount of intelligence, and you can't really do much to change it.
2. No matter who you are, you can significantly change your intelligence level.
3. You can learn new things, but you can't really change your basic intelligence.
4. No matter who you are, you can significantly change your level of talent.

Fixed Mind-set

Intelligence is static



Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...

EFFORT

...see effort as fruitless or worse



SUCCESS OF OTHERS

...feel threatened by the success of others



CHALLENGES

...avoid challenges



OBSTACLES

...give up easily



CRITICISM

...ignore useful negative feedback



As a result, they may plateau early and achieve less than their full potential.

All this confirms a **deterministic view of the world.**



Growth Mind-set
Intelligence can be developed

Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...



...see effort as the path to mastery



...find lessons and inspiration in the success of others



...embrace challenges



...persist in the face of setbacks



...learn from criticism

As a result, they reach ever-higher levels of achievement.

All this gives them a **greater sense of free will**.



Practice and Demonstrate a Growth Mindset

- Regularly talk about things you have learned or challenges you are facing- even as a parent!
- Emphasize how challenges and setbacks resulted in improvements.
- Tell stories of your childhood and challenges you overcame with hard work.
- Practice problem solving strategies.

Praise Effort

Promoting a Growth Mindset

Praise and Encouragement

“It is great to see how excited you are about learning something new.”

“You put so much thought into that essay. It really makes me understand Shakespeare in a new way.”

“That homework was so long and involved, I really admire the way you concentrated and finished it.”

“You worked hard to finish that project and it paid off.”

Supporting Staff to Do the Work

- Positive working environment
- Training and support
- Resources
- Resilience & stress management supports
- Community & trust



Connecting with Students



Allen N. Mendler

Support Staff in Becoming Skilled at Three Types of Connections

- Personal
- Academic
- Social

An Example

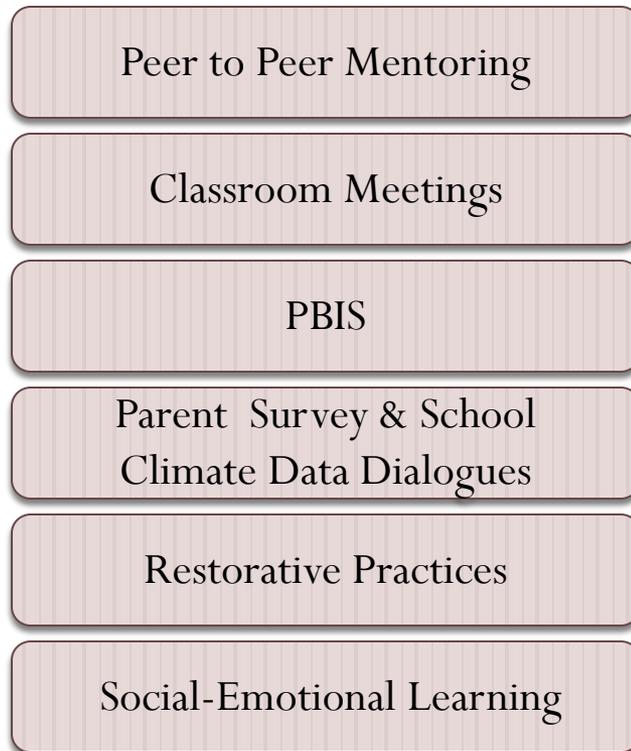
Tiered Interventions & Supports for Improving School Climate



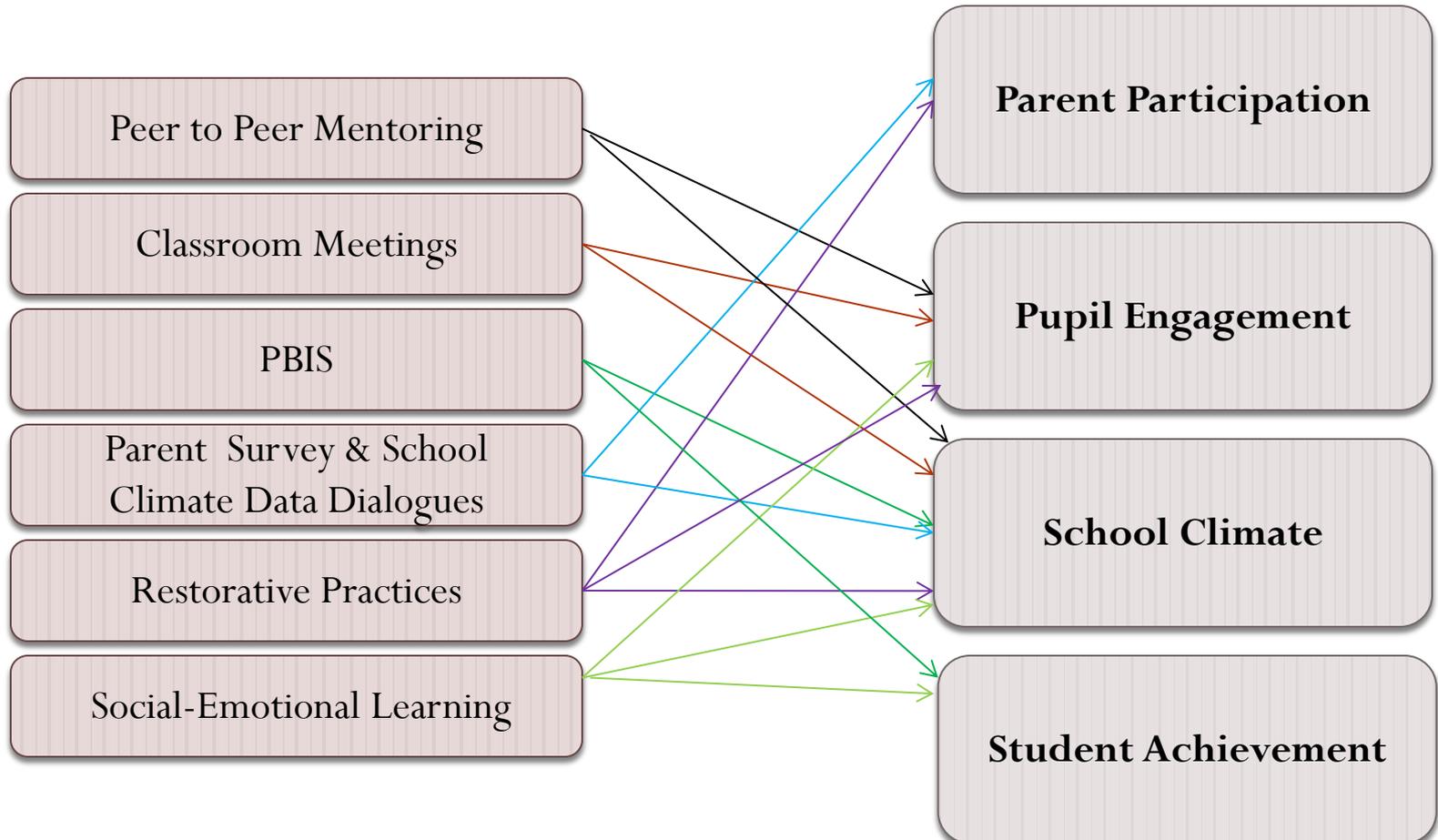
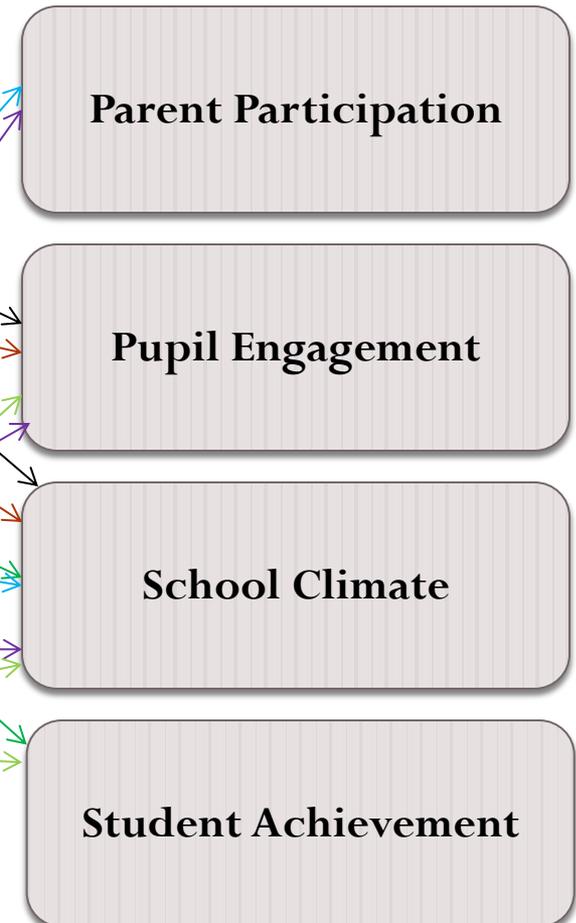
- Conflict-harm restorative conferences
- Customized interventions
- Behavioral –mental health referrals
- Small groups: truancy, tardiness, social-emotional coping skills, anxiety, grief, divorce, trauma, re-entry, etc.
- Impromptu restorative conferences
- Problem-solving circles
- Community & relationship building
- Social-emotional skill instruction
- Personalized, engaging learning
- Behavioral expectations & consequences
- Listening circles & class meetings
- Staff training student mental health
- Staff/student stress management

Mapping School Climate Strategies to LCAP Priorities

Practices & Programs



LCAP Priorities





Student Mental Health Matters

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- [Presentations](#)
- [Other Tools and Websites](#)

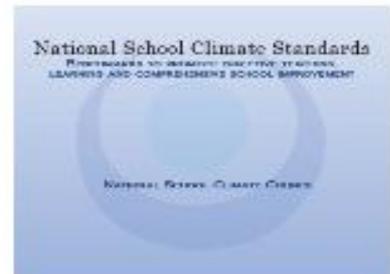
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[National School Climate Standards](#)

Technical Assistance is Available:

- Data Dialogue
- Student Listening Circles
- Action Planning
- Stress Management for Adults and Youth

ocde.us/healthyminds



Regional K-12 Student Mental Health Initiative

Education • Prevention • Collaboration

http://www.regionalk12smhi.org/

Resources

Regional K-12 Student Mental Health Initiative

Education • Prevention • Collaboration

Welcome!

This clearinghouse of resources and regional best practices is provided to assist California county offices of education, districts and schools to develop and implement effective programs and services that promote the mental health and wellness of students in grades K-8, with linkages to preschool and grades 9-12.

Our [search](#) feature helps you find useful resources specific to your needs as a teacher, school staff member, or administrator. Mental health staff, parents, caregivers and community members will also find the resources helpful as they work in partnership with schools.

Featured Resources

▶ [Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline:](#)

Published by the U.S. Department of Education in January 2014 this guide provides three principles for improving school climate with practical action steps. The principles include:

▶ creating a...

▶ [40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents \(ages 12-18\):](#)

The Developmental Assets lists 40 factors that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Research indicates that youth with more of these assets are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors, including alcohol use...



School Climate and Culture



Programs and Practices

Click on a resource title below to view the full resource description, including a link to the actual resource. Resources in the blue box highlight key resources in this topic area.



[Incredible Years](#)

Curriculum based program for students, teachers and parents of students pre-kindergarten to middle school. Skills based groups support pro-social skills divided into three program components working jointly promoting social emotional and behavioral ...



[Mental Health First Aid](#)

MHFA is a course for adults designed to improve knowledge and modify attitudes and perceptions about mental health and related issues, including how to respond to individuals who are experiencing one or more acute mental health crises. Training is ...



[No Bully "The No Bully System"](#)

A step by step process and intervention to prevent and stop bullying in schools, this system gives the target audience of school leaders and teachers a series of interventions for responding to bullying and harassment. The practice uses a four level ...



[Olweus Bullying Prevention Project \(YSP\)](#)

A schoolwide program designed to improve peer relations to prevent or reduce bullying in the elementary, middle and junior high school setting. It has also been adapted successfully for high school. All students and adults participate, with ...



[Positive Behavior Intervention and Support \(PBIS\)](#)

School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Support is a framework for achieving improved academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. It guides intervention at the school and district level by a structure to support the adults and students ...



[Project SUCCESS](#)

A substance use prevention program that can be used with at-risk students with poor academic performance, truancy, discipline problems, negative attitudes toward school and parental substance abuse in alternative and comprehensive middle and high ...



[Second Step](#)

Developmentally appropriate, short, interactive lessons for students in Pre-K – middle school developed for prevention of substance abuse, bullying, and violence. Students learn social-emotional skills such as self-regulation, empathy, ...

Thank you.
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improvement and continued funding.

Open up your chat box and click
on the link to take you to the 4-minute webinar survey.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/RQDHJT3>

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