

AISD



AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS 2008-2009

Survey Report

GARCIA MIDDLE SCHOOL

A healthy school climate is characterized by positive relationships among students, all campus staff, and the community. School climate is a key factor in several important outcomes including student achievement, reduced violence, higher morale, and faculty trust (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002). More specifically, research in AISD indicates that staff climate survey results are related to student Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) performance in both math and reading (Bush-Richards, Cornetto, & Schmitt, 2008; Schmitt, 2006).

The AISD Staff Climate Survey was developed from the research-based Organizational Climate Inventory (OCI), which measures several dimensions of school climate (Hoy et al., 2002) including *Collegial Leadership*, *Professional Teacher Behavior*, and *Achievement Press*. In addition to these items from the OCI, the 2008-2009 AISD Staff Climate Survey included items developed by researchers to measure *Community Engagement* (Tschannen-Moran, Parish, & DiPaola, 2006); climate items designed for relevance to all campus staff; school safety items; and items measuring the implementation of Positive Behavior Support (PBS) on campus. Related items were grouped together in *subscales*, and the average across subscale items was computed as a *subscale score*.

In Fall 2008, 1,322 middle school staff responded to the survey, representing approximately 64% of middle school campus staff. Table 1 provides a summary of respondents from Garcia by position type for the past 3 years.

Table 1. Survey Respondents for Garcia and All Middle School Campuses by Position Type, 2006-2007 through 2008-2009

	2006-2007	Garcia 2007-2008	2008-2009	All MS 2008-2009
Teachers	n/a	37	21	870 (73%)
Administrators and non-teaching professional	n/a	10	6	112 (55%)
Classified/support staff	n/a	14	12	274 (42%)
Unspecified	n/a	10	0	66
Total	n/a	71	39	1,322 (64%)

Source: Department of Program Evaluation survey records, district Human Resources data, and Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) records.

SCHOOL CLIMATE DIMENSIONS

The first step in improving campus climate is to look at the score for each of the Climate subscales (Table 2). These scores can help in identifying areas in which staff ratings were higher or lower than the desired subscale scores.

For 2008-2009, **the highest Climate subscale for Garcia was General Climate**. Examine the individual items that make up General Climate and identify those that are particularly positive. Make note of any item that has a score marked by an arrow that indicates it is statistically higher than scores for that item in previous years. Discuss this area of strength with staff and note the ways in which initiatives on campus have addressed these issues in particular during the current school year.

To improve campus climate, it is beneficial to focus on subscales with the lowest scores. For example, **for 2008-2009, the lowest Climate subscale for Garcia was Achievement Press**. Examine the individual items contributing to Achievement Press in the table below. Examine these individual items and their average responses to determine possible areas for campus improvement. Often, improving climate in one dimension will have a positive effect on other dimensions.

Each of the climate items was rated on a scale from **1** (*rarely occurs*) to **4** (*very frequently occurs*). Respondents also had the option of marking *N/A*; these responses were not used to compute the item averages.

Professional Teacher Behavior. This subscale consisted of 8 items that addressed the degree to which respondents indicated respect for colleagues' competence, commitment to students, autonomous judgment, and mutual cooperation and support among the faculty. The individual item and average subscale scores fo

Achievement Press. Achievement press is marked by students who persist, strive to achieve, and are respected by each other and teachers for their academic successes. This subscale consisted of 8 items that described the extent to which Garcia has set high but achievable academic standards and goals. In addition, this subscale measured the extent to which parents, teachers, and principals exert pressure for high standards and school improvement. The individual item and average subscale scores for Garcia and for all Middle School schools are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Achievement Press for Garcia and All Middle School Campuses

Achievement Press	Garcia			All MS
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2008-2009
3. The school sets high standards for academic performance.	n/a	2.87	3.00	3.53
6. Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically.	n/a	2.56	2.97á	3.40
7. Parents exert pressure to maintain high standards.	n/a	1.86	1.81	2.44
8. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	n/a	2.91	2.65â	3.27
13. Parents press for school improvement.	n/a	2.19	2.22	2.38
15. Students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	n/a	2.45	2.77á	3.13
19. Students respect others who get good grades.	n/a	1.69	1.94á	3.02
25. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	n/a	1.68	1.86	2.25
32. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	n/a	1.73	2.14á	2.72
34. The learning environment is orderly and serious.	n/a	2.02	2.41á	3.12
Achievement Press subscale	n/a	2.20	2.38á	2.94

Note: It is desirable to have a response of at least 3.0; responses of at least 3.0 are noted in bold.

General Climate. These items measure the extent to which all campus staff are friendly towards each other and work towards clear, common goals. The individual item and subscale averages for Garcia and for all Middle School schools are shown in Table 7.

Table 7. General Climate for Garcia and All Middle School Campuses

General Climate	Garcia			All MS
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2008-2009
24. Campus staff are friendly to each other.	n/a	3.08	3.22	3.28
27. Campus staff exhibit pride in their affiliation with the school.	n/a	2.44	2.95	

SCHOOL SAFETY, BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT, AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT

The next section of the survey addressed the safety of the school environment for students and staff, including the prevalence of undesirable student behavior on campus, staff satisfaction with how student behavior was managed on each campus, and staff familiarity with issues related to PBS.

Undesirable Student Behaviors. These items measured staff reports about the frequency of selected undesirable student behaviors on campus. The items were rated on a scale of 0 (*never happens*) to 4 (*happens daily*). The individual item and average subscale scores for Garcia and for all Middle School schools are shown in Table 8. Items with *high* average responses (above 2.0) should be prioritized for improvement.

Table 8. Undesirable Student Behaviors for Garcia and All Middle School Campuses



PBS. These items were new to the survey in 2008-2009 and addressed staff knowledge and behaviors related to PBS. Response options included *yes*, *no*, *don't know*, and *N/A*. For each item, the percentage of staff who answered *yes* and *no* are provided in Table 10, along with the average percentage of *yes* and *no* responses across the 4 items.

Table 10. Positive Behavior Support for Garcia and All Middle School Campuses

Positive Behavior Support	Garcia		All MS	
	2008-2009		2008-2009	
	No	Yes	No	Yes
56. I have taught students the guidelines for success in the form of rules/expectations for one or more settings.	5%	79%	10%	72%
57. I know how to refer students to campus resources such as IMPACT, behavior support specialists, School to Community Liaisons, etc.	13%	67%	8%	75%
58. I feel there is consistent reinforcement of commendable student behavior on my campus.	36%	46%	14%	69%
59. I know how to refer students to external agencies such as Communities in Schools, Safe Place, etc.	8%	71%	23%	51%
Average percentage	15%	66%	14%	67%

REFERENCES

Bush-Richards, A., Cornetto, K., & Schmitt, L. (2008). Summary of 2005-2006 through 2007-2008 AISD staff climate survey results (Publication 07.23). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District Department of Program Evaluation.

Hoy, W. K., Smith, P. A., & Sweetland, S. R. (2002). The development of the organizational climate index for Middle Schools: Its measure and relationship to faculty trust. *The Middle School Journal*, 86, 38-49.

Schmitt, L. (2006). *E-Team report: How does school climate related to academic achievement in AISD, and what can we learn from these relationships?* (Publication 06.02). Austin, TX: Austin Independent School District Department of Program Evaluation.

Tschannen-Moran, M., Parish, J., & DiPaola, M. F. (2006). School climate: The interplay between interpersonal relationships and student achievement. *Journal of School Leadership*, 16, 386-415.