Quality Counts: Involving Students in School Climate
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Quality Counts: Involving Students in School Climate

Expert Presenters:

Bennett Lieberman, principal, Central Park East High School, New York

Meagan O’Malley, research associate, middle school climate initiative, WestEd
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
In East Harlem they call it a “Hot Mess”
Culture = Chaos
CENTRAL PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Building a Healthy School Culture

The First Three Years

Triage
The Second Three Years
Malica’s Story
# Programs Equal Opportunity

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CENTRAL PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL
Building a Healthy School Culture

Current Student Outcomes

Graduation Rate – 85.6% (2011)
Attendance – 94.6% (2012)
Applications / Enrollment – 3100 (2013)
Post-Secondary Readiness – 37.1%
Post-Secondary Enrollment – 58.1%
AP & Honors / College Classes – 413 Seats
2011 Scholarship Dollars – 1 Million +
FASFA Completion – 100%
College Application Completion – 100%
Persistence
Talk About It®
Anonymous Communication Service

• Launched in 2005; serves hundreds of thousands of students in K12 as well as mental health services and the US military

• **Anonymous text messaging & online messaging**; meets students where they are

• Breaks ‘code of silence’ about bullying & other issues

• Secure and web-based
What is School Climate?
(Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009)

The quality and character of school life ...

based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life

...reflects NORMS, GOALS, VALUES, interpersonal relationships,
teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational
structures.
Programs & Curricula

Norms & Values expressed in **day-to-day experiences**
What norms create positive school climates? (O’Malley & Eklund, 2012)

- Transparent and unbiased rules and expectations
- Opportunities for growth and achievement
- Positive, productive relationships
- Shared goals and identity
- Awareness and respect for diversity/individual value
- Positive, productive relationships
Why School Climate?
IMPACT ON STUDENTS

• School Motivation and Connectedness
• Attendance & School Completion
• Scores on measures of academic achievement—including tests in language, reading, and math, and overall grade-point-average
• Feelings of safety at school
• Willingness to report potential threats to safety
• REDUCED alcohol and other drug use
IMPACT ON STAFF

- Greater implementation fidelity of new curricula and interventions
- Decreased reports of teacher burnout
- Greater levels of teacher job satisfaction
- Intention to stay in the teaching profession
- Increased teacher retention
IMPACT ON SCHOOL

- Reduced discipline referrals and school suspensions
- Improved Academic Performance Index (API)
School Climate and Academic Performance
(Hanson, 2012)
Models healthy communication skills, such as active listening and solution-oriented dialogue

+ Promotes positive norms around relationship building, respect for diverse opinions and ideas

+ Promotes a shared school identity and investment in shared school improvement goals

= BUILDS POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE
The Student Listening Circle: A four-phase process

1. **Orientation for All Participants**

2. **Preparation of Participant Groups**
   - Students
   - Adults

3. **Student Listening Circle**

4. **Reflection and Solution Planning**
1. How do you know when an adult in your school CARES about you?

2. How do you know when an adult in your school BELIEVES in you?

3. What makes your classes engaging or interesting to you?

4. What kinds of things could you do at your school that would make a difference?

5. If you could change or improve one thing in this school, what would it be?
58 SLCs conducted in S3 grantee comprehensive high schools throughout California in winter of 2011

Student response cards collected in 36 sites, deidentified and responses entered into database.

Ten schools selected through a stratified randomization process that ensured representation of urban, suburban, and rural schools (as defined by the California State Department of Education).

Responses first coded by each author independently and then again after reaching consensus about theme labels across authors.
Question 1 & Question 2: How do you know when a teacher cares about/believes in you?

1. Attention to the Personal Connection

2. Commitment to Student Learning

3. Expectations for Behavior and Success

4. Encouragement and Motivation to Succeed
Question 3: What makes your classes engaging or interesting to you?

1. Variety in Instructional Techniques

1. Teacher Attitudes & Behaviors

1. Opportunities for Expression & Self-Direction

2. Real-World Applications
Question 4: If you could change or improve one thing in this school, what would it be?

1. Physical Environment & Resources
1. Staff-Student Rapport
1. Student Peer Relationships
1. School Rules and Policies
Question 5: What could you do at your school that would make a difference?

1. Pro-social Peer Interactions

2. Community Events, Activities

1. Positive Norm-Encouraging Behavior
Programs & Curricula

Norms & Values expressed in day-to-day experiences
Meagan O’Malley, Ph.D., LEP

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Phone: 562 -799-5421
Slide 1: What is School Climate?


Slide 3: What is School Climate: Values, Norms, & Goals

Slide 5: Impact on Students


Slide 6: Impact on Students


Slide 7: Impact on Staff


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doi:10.1016/j.tate.2007.06.005:10.1016/j.tate.2007.06.005


doi:10.1007/s10464-007-9142-z PMid:17917806


Slide 8, cont.


Slide 9: School Climate & Academic Performance


Slides 19-23: Listening Out Loud: Themes from SLCs

Since 2005...
What ARE the Top 10 Issues students want to Talk about?
Top 10 Issues Talked About

1. Bullying / Cyberbullying
2. Stress
3. Family Problems
4. Depression
5. Fighting
6. Peer Pressure
7. Drugs
8. Cutting / Self-Injury
9. Cheating on Schoolwork
10. Sexual Harassment
Most Messages Sent From

1. 8th Graders
2. 7th Graders
3. 6th Graders
4. 9th Graders
How do we reach students today?

• 72% of all teens (88% of teen cell phone users) are texters
• 1 in 3 teens sends 100 + texts/day

Source: Teens and Mobile Phones report dated April 20, 2010
Get the Whitepaper

Creating a Culture of Dialogue
(Practical steps, funding resources, more)

Free download:
talk.schoolmessenger.com
How Talk About It helps
Talk About It is the First and only anonymous communication service that allows students to get the help they need to be safe and successful.
Faculty meet students where they are – online and with text messaging – to help solve issues.
By reducing the stigma of communicating with trusted adults, the service allows students to open up and break the code of silence.
A dialogue ensues, most often face-to-face, and students solve issues at the point of inception rather than when it is too late.
Get the Whitepaper

Creating a Culture of Dialogue
(Practical steps, funding resources, more)

Free download:
talk.schoolmessenger.com
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Road Maps to COMMON CORE Success

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

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