

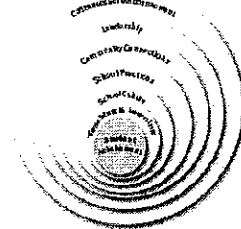
Using Culture and Climate to Support the School Planning Process: Strategies for Improvement

Developed by:
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What is School Culture?

Definition of School Culture

School Culture
Reflects the shared ideas—assumptions, values, and beliefs—that give an organization its identity and standard for expected behaviors.



Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 2

What is School Culture?

Components of School Culture

- Culture is reflected in an organization's atmosphere, myths, and moral code. The characteristics of a school district's culture can be deduced from multiple layers:
- Artifacts and symbols: the way its buildings are decorated and maintained
- Values: the manner in which administrators, principals and staff function and interact
- Assumptions: the beliefs that are taken for granted about human nature

Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 3

What is School Culture?

Development Over Time

As a school district's culture develops over time, it is maintained by several practices:

- Common beliefs and values that key individuals communicate and enforce
- Heroes and heroines whose actions and accomplishments embody these values
- Rituals and ceremonies that reinforce these values
- Stories that reflect for what the organization stands

Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 4

What is School Culture?

Support for Continuous School Improvement

	Supports learning...	Impedes learning
Artifacts and symbols	The building and its arrangements reflect the children, their needs, and their educational accomplishments.	There is little that reflects an emphasis on children and their education.
Values	Administrators, teachers, students, and parents participate in decision making.	Decisions are made without participation of teachers and parents.
Assumptions and beliefs	All students can learn. Parents want their children to succeed. Parents are partners in education.	Some students are incapable of learning or too lazy to learn. Parents don't care. Parents know nothing about education

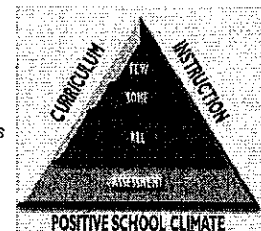
Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

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What is School Climate?

Definitions of School Climate

School Climate
Reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place.



Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 6

What is School Climate?

Definitions of School Climate

- School climate is evident in the feelings and attitudes about a school expressed by students, teachers, staff and parents—the way students and staff “feel” about being at school each day.
- School climate is a significant element in discussions about improving academic performance and school reform. It is also mentioned in discussions of potential solutions to problems such as bullying, inter-student conflicts, suicide, character education, and moral education.

Best Practice Briefs (2009). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

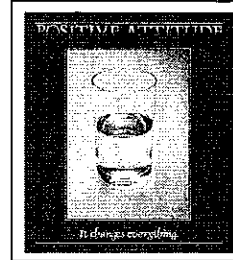
Page 7

What is School Climate?

Components of School Climate

Several aspects of a school's environment comprise its climate:

- Physical appearance
- Faculty relations
- Student interactions
- Leadership/decision making
- Disciplined environment
- Learning environment
- Attitude and culture
- School-community relations



Best Practice Briefs (2009). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 8

What is School Climate?

Development of School Climate Over Time

School climate can be summarized in four aspects of the school environment:

- Physical environment – Welcoming, conducive to learning
- Social environment – Promotes communication, interaction
- Affective environment – Promotes self esteem, belonging
- Academic environment – Promotes self-fulfillment, learning

Best Practice Briefs (2009). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

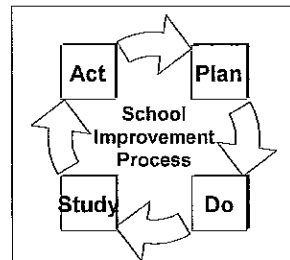
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What is School Climate?

Support for Continuous School Improvement

Supports vs. Impediments

- Physical
- Social
- Affective
- Academic



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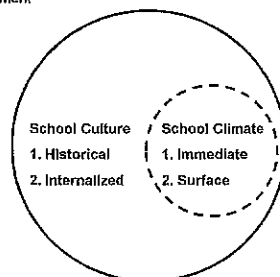
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The Relationship Between Culture and Climate

Support for Continuous School Improvement

Internalized vs. Surface

▪ Culture has to do with the values and assumptions underlying behavior, whereas climate is based on people's perceptions of behavior itself.



Stulp, G. A. & Smith, S. C. (1999). Triangulating school culture: Values, symbols, values and the icebergs. ERIC

Page 11

Positive School Culture

Characteristics of a Positive School Culture

- Shared sense of purpose and value
- Norms of continuous school improvement
- Responsibility for a student's learning
- Collaborative and collegial relationships
- Focus on meaningful professional development
- Celebrate student success
- Recognize hard-working teachers



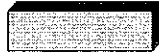
Peterson, K. (2002). Positive or negative? Journal of Staff Development Summer 2002

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Toxic School Culture

Characteristics of a Toxic School Culture

- Sense of depression and frustration
- No shared sense of purpose
- School is fragmented
- Negative norms around improvement
- Blame students for not learning
- Blame the community for not having better students
- Little celebration of success
- Few traditions

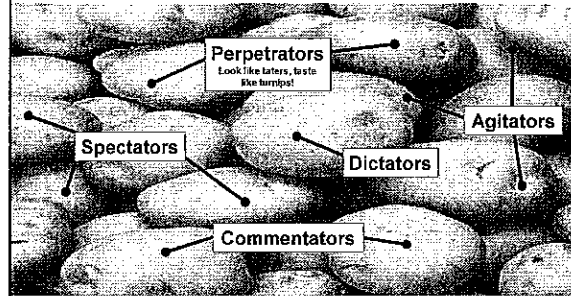


Patzanov, K. (2002). Positive or negative? Journal of Staff Development, Summer 23(3).

Page 13

Toxic School Culture

Characteristics of a Toxic School Culture – "Full of Takers and Trailors"



Page 14

School Connectedness

Student Behavior and Student Achievement - Research

School connectedness – the degree to which a student experiences a sense of caring and closeness to teachers and the overall school environment.

- School connectedness or particular dimensions have been shown to effect academic achievement.
- Weak connectedness has been shown to be associated with increased health risks, effectively detracting from the ability to focus and optimize learning and achievement.

Wilson, D. (2004). The inteches of school climate and school connectedness and relational ties with aggression and victimization. Journal of School Health.

Page 15

School Climate and Student Behavior

Support for Continuous Safe School Planning - Research

School climate can support or discourage problematic behavior or pro-social behavior

- Climate effects the sense of safety and risk for delinquency
- Negative climate increases risks of delinquent behavior
- Informal social norms exacerbate behavior problems
- In schools with warm and welcoming positive climates, students experience greater attachment and commitment

Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

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School Climate and Student Achievement

Support for Continuous School Improvement - Research

Climate is a key factor in productivity and success

- Climate affects focus
- Climate affects motivation, motivation affects productivity
- Climate affects the willingness of stakeholders

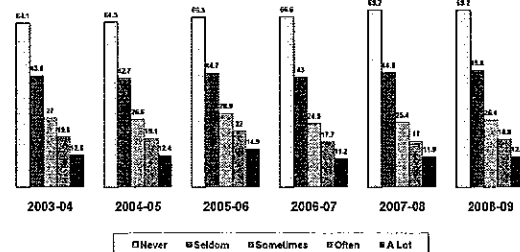
Numerous studies document that students in schools with a better school climate have higher achievement and better socio-emotional health.

Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

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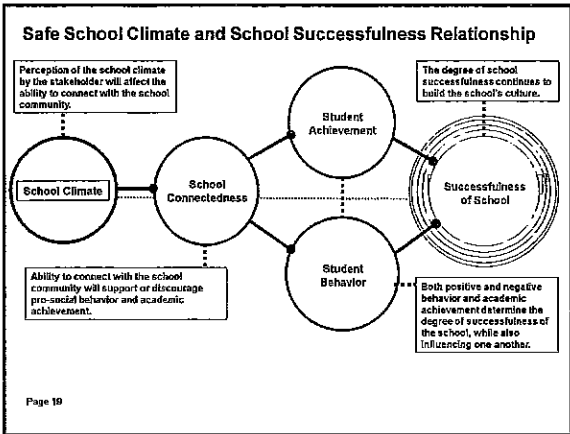
Illicit Drug Use by Make Good Grades

Support for Continuous Safe School Planning - Research



Pride Surveys. (2008). The Alabama Student Survey of Risk and Protective Behaviors: Six Year Executive Summary. Auburn

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School Culture and School Improvement

Support for Continuous School Improvement - Research

- Improving student behavior and academic performance generally requires changing school climate and school culture. Change may require moving individuals and organizations along a continuum from "at risk" to "safe" to "thriving."
- While making positive changes in school climate motivates staff and students to improve, the district-level school culture must also change if school reforms are to be sustained for long-term improvement.

Best Practice Briefs (2004). Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning

Page 20

Where do we start?

Page 21

Improving the School Culture

Support for Continuous School Improvement

- Reading the School Culture
- Assessing the School Culture
- Actively Shaping the School Culture

Peterson, K. (2002). Positive or negative? Journal of Staff Development Summer 2002.

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Reading the School Culture

Support for Continuous School Improvement

<p>Historian Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand where the culture came from Kinds of experiences that built the culture overtime Major events in the schools history 	<p>Anthropologist Perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core adjectives that describe the school Observe core values Observe cultural messages of the school Observe relationships Observe school improvement planning
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Peterson, K. (2002). Positive or negative? Journal of Staff Development Summer 2002.

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Assessing the School Culture

Support for Continuous School Improvement

Assessment begins with deciding what parts to change and what parts to reinforce.

- Observe positive vs. toxic parts of the culture
- Observe supportive vs. non-supportive parts of the culture
- Observe collegiate vs. fragmented parts of the culture

Peterson, K. (2002). Positive or negative? Journal of Staff Development Summer 2002.

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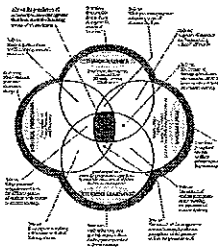
Assessing the School Culture

Support for Continuous School Improvement

Observing perception data

- Pride Survey
- Take 20 Teacher Survey
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey
- School Improvement Plans
- SACS Information

MULTIPLE MEASURES OF DATA



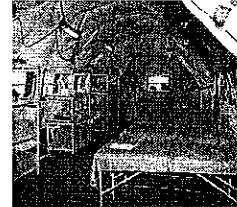
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Assessing the School Culture

School Culture Triage

What is School Culture Triage?

The immediate evaluation of the current condition of school culture based on responses to a brief series of questions. It assists in determining the need for and extent of care to be provided – a protocol for care.



Wagner, C. & Madsen-Copas, P. (2002). An audit of school culture starts with two handy tools. *Journal of Staff Development, 23*(2), 42-43.

Page 26

Assessing the School Culture

School Culture Triage

Measuring the degree to which the following behaviors are present in a school or school district are helpful in assessing the school culture.

- Professional Collaboration – Do teachers and staff meet and work together to solve professional issues?
- Collegial Relationships – Do people enjoy working together, support one another and feel valued and included?
- Efficacy/Self-determination – Are people here because they want to be? Do they work to improve their skills as true professionals?

Wagner, C. & Madsen-Copas, P. (2002). An audit of school culture starts with two handy tools. *Journal of Staff Development, 23*(2), 42-43.

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Assessing the School Culture

School Culture Triage

School Culture Triage and Overall School Improvement

- Triage has been used in the medical sense to determine the type of treatment given to casualties.
- In the school improvement sense, it determines whether a school needs continuous diagnosis (monitor the current condition) or whether the school needs an in-depth analysis for extensive development (critical care).

Wagner, C. & Madsen-Copas, P. (2002). An audit of school culture starts with two handy tools. *Journal of Staff Development, 23*(2), 42-43.

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“Not everything that counts can be measured, and not everything that can be measured counts.”

— Albert Einstein

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Shaping School Culture for Continuous School Improvement

An Active Process

Actively shaping school culture through:

- Transformation and Reinforcement
- Celebration and Recognition
- Student Involvement
- Physical Space
- Correlates of School Culture
- Developing Values and Norms of School Culture
- School Culture and Leadership

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Common Characteristics of Successful Schools

Support for Continuous School Improvement - Research

- Guiding principles that focus all stakeholders
- High standards, commitment to the advancement of students
- Belief in each student being known, understood, and encouraged
- Emphasis on student inquiry and experimental learning
- Some degree of choice
- Commitment to higher order thinking, and to students practicing creativity and innovation, analysis and evaluation, and real-world problem solving
- Belief in the importance of personal values, integrity, morality

Wilson, L. (2007). Great American schools: The power of culture and passion. Educational Horizons, Fall 2007

Page 31

Transformation and Reinforcement

Actively Shaping School Culture – Key Contributors to Positive, Productive Schools

- Sense of purpose
- Leadership
- Democratic values
- Accountability
- Relationships and caring
- Passion for learning
- Meaningful learning
- High expectations
- Authentic learning
- Empowerment
- Commitment

Wilson, L. (2007). Great American schools: The power of culture and passion. Educational Horizons, Fall 2007

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Celebration and Recognition

Actively Shaping School Culture

An organization's celebrations and recognitions reveal a great deal about its culture and climate:

- How people link the past with their present
- What behaviors are reinforced
- What assumptions are at work
- What is valued

DeFoor, R. (1998). Why Celebrate? It sends a vivid message about what is valued. Journal of Staff Development 19(4)

Page 33

Celebration and Recognition

Actively Shaping School Culture

Lee Bolman and Terry Deal (1995):

"Ritual and ceremony help us experience the unseen webs of significance that tie a community together...Without ritual and ceremony, transitions become incomplete, a clutter of comings and goings. Life becomes an endless set of Wednesdays."

Bolman, L.A. Deal, T. (1995). Leading with soul: An uncommon journey of spirit. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

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Celebration and Recognition

Actively Shaping School Culture - Research

The importance of attention to celebrating accomplishments has been cited as:

- A major factor in influencing culture (Peterson, 1988)
- An essential strategy for enhancing organizational effectiveness (Kouzes and Posner, 1987)
- A necessary condition for creating a learning community (Thompson, 1995)

DeFoor, R. (1998). Why Celebrate? It sends a vivid message about what is valued. Journal of Staff Development 19(4)

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Celebration and Recognition

Actively Shaping School Culture

Benefit of celebration and recognition

- Recipients of recognition feel noted and appreciated
- Celebration reinforces shared values
- Signals what is important
- Celebration provides examples of the values of the school
- Encourages others to act in accordance with new values
- Celebration fuels momentum
- Celebration is fun

DeFoor, R. (1998). Why Celebrate? It sends a vivid message about what is valued. Journal of Staff Development 19(4)

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Student Involvement

Actively Shaping School Culture

Research has shown that:

- Students play a crucial role in the success of school reform
- When educators partner with students to improve learning, teaching and leadership, school change is positive and effective for everyone.

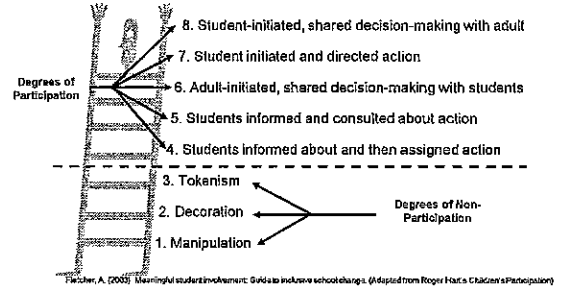


Fletcher, A. (2003) Meaningful student involvement: Guide to inclusive school change. (Adapted from Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation)

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Student Involvement

Actively Shaping School Culture



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Physical Space

Actively Shaping School Culture

Physical spaces can encourage the development of a school's personality with the use of:

- Ornamentation, decoration and furnishings
- Art, paintings or artifacts that convey culture
- Thematics emphasis
- Graphics
- Color and texture
- Visual themes



Architects of Achievement (2003). Creating culture with physical space. Author.

Page 38

Physical Space

Actively Shaping School Culture

Questions for determining the types of spaces and furnishings necessary to support instructional design:

- Are there places for a variety of areas for collaborative work?
- Are there places for inquiry and project-based learning?
- Are there environments that reflect students' passions?
- Are there places for lively learning?
- Are there display spaces for student work?

Architects of Achievement (2003). Creating culture with physical space. Author.

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Physical Space

Actively Shaping School Culture

Questions for determining the types of spaces and furnishings necessary to support instructional design (con't):

- Are there places for student reflection and quiet work?
- Are there individual student workstations?
- Are there furnishings that encourage collaboration?
- Is flexibility built in to encourage adaptive use of space?

Architects of Achievement (2003). Creating culture with physical space. Author.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

School improvement emerges from four elements:

- Strengthening teacher skills
- Renovation of the curriculum
- Improvement of the organization
- Development of responsible school-community partnerships

A school's culture will either **energize** or **undermine** the four elements.

Spaer, J. & King, M. (1995). Good seeds grow in strong cultures. Educational Leadership, 42(6).

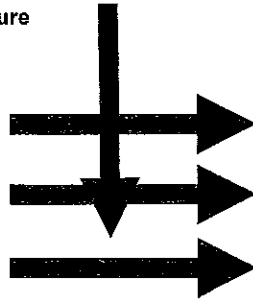
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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

1. The Vertical Slice

The ongoing interaction of team members helps to establish "a vertical culture" that crosses over all of the horizontal cultures within the organization.



Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

2. Vision, Not Deficiencies

The visionary focuses the team's attention on defining what school should be like and then exerting the effort to achieve the ideal.



Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

3. Collegial Relationships

Mutual ownership of both problems and visions; one party cannot create a vision at the expense of the others.

4. Trust and Support

"Trust develops as we understand people's values and interests, where they are coming from and why they take a given position."

Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

5. Values and Interests, Not Power and Position

"The role of the leader is to reconcile interests rather than develop compromises among positions."

6. Access to Quality Information

Accurate information is useful in building a common culture, enabling the work group to make sound decisions, and giving each employee feedback for improving his or her performance.

Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

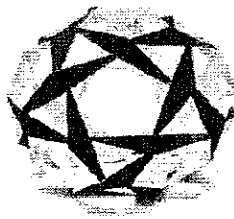
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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

7. Broad Participation

When all members participate and contribute their talents, the group derives a synergistic effect that is greater than if the individuals worked independently.



Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

8. Lifelong Growth

Through resources and encouragement, the organization helps each individual sustain a process of inquiry and self-development.

9. Individual Empowerment

For employees to be free and empowered to take risks and make a difference, the organizational culture must enable the uniqueness of each individual "to unfold and flow."

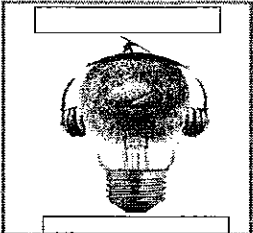
Covington, W.G. & Gresso, D.W. (1993). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slap, S. & Smith S.C. (1995). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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Correlates of School Culture

Actively Shaping School Culture

10. Continuous and Sustained Innovation
Effective cultures invite and support continuous improvement from within rather than externally developed reform and restructuring efforts



Cunningham, W.G. & Grasso, D.W. (1992). Cultural leadership: The cultural of excellence in education. Slag, S. & Smith S.C. (1993). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

Page 49

Developing Values and Norms

Actively Shaping School Culture

Creating norms

- Observe and write down the norms that are already in use
- Have group members suggest ideal behaviors for groups with eventual refinement
- Norms must fit the group

We will operate

We will be responsible

We will be transparent

Richardson, J. (1995). Norms put the "Golden Rule" into practice for groups. Tools for Schools Aug-Sept, National Staff Development Council.

Page 50

Developing Values and Norms

Actively Shaping School Culture

Publicizing the Norms

- Post them and celebrate them

Enforcing the Norms

- "If you don't call attention that a norm has been violated, in effect you are creating a second set of norms."
- Find light ways of indicating a violation

We will invite and welcome

We will be confidential

We will work together

Richardson, J. (1995). Norms put the "Golden Rule" into practice for groups. Tools for Schools Aug-Sept, National Staff Development Council.

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Developing Values and Norms

Actively Shaping School Culture

Evaluating the Norms

- How well did we do this norm?
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of norms
- The more up front you are about how the group is doing, the easier it will be to communicate about other issues you're dealing with.

We will be involved

We will use humor


We will be trusting

Richardson, J. (1995). Norms put the "Golden Rule" into practice for groups. Tools for Schools Aug-Sept, National Staff Development Council.

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School Culture and Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture



- Coherent vision
- Coordination of the process
- Modeling values and beliefs
- Collaboration
- Team-building
- Second agenda
- People before paper
- Nuture the reinforced

Slag, S. & Smith S.C. (1993). Transforming school culture: Stories, symbols, values and the leader's role. ERIC.

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School Culture and Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture

Segiovanni's Leadership Forces

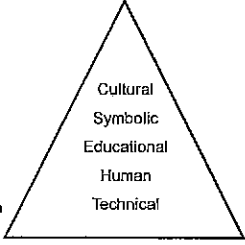
Cultural Skills – Building norms and examining correlates of culture

Symbolic Skills – Ways of articulating and representing core institutional values

Educational Skills – Knowledge about teaching and learning

Human Skills – Listening, group dynamics, and conflict resolution

Technical Skills – Managerial matters such as scheduling and delegating



Segiovanni, T. (1994). Leadership and excellence in schooling. Educational Leadership 41(1)

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School Culture and Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture

- If leaders understand school culture, they can shape values, beliefs, and attitudes for a secure and nurturing learning environment (Stolp, 1994).
- The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization (Senge, 1994).

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School Culture and Leadership: Managerial Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture

As managers, principals take on eight major roles:

- Organizational planning
- Resource allocators
- Coordinators of programs
- Supervisors of staff and outcomes
- Disseminators of ideas and information
- Jurists who adjudicate disagreements and conflicts
- Gatekeepers at the boundaries of the school
- Analysts who use approaches to address problems

Peterson, K., & Deal, T. (2002). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

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School Culture and Leadership: Symbolic Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture

As leaders, principals take on eight symbolic roles:

- Historian
- Anthropological detective
- Visionary
- Symbol
- Potter
- Poet
- Actor
- Healer

Peterson, K., & Deal, T. (2002). *Shaping school culture: The heart of leadership*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

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School Culture and Leadership

Actively Shaping School Culture

- A caring educational leader is organizing structures and systems, leading in the instructional arena, and promoting a healthy school culture (Beck, 1994).
- The most successful [school leaders] are bifocal leaders, shaping culture in their managerial roles and smoothing functioning in their symbolic roles (Deal and Peterson, 1994).

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Understanding Culture and Climate to Support the School Planning Process

Closing Remarks

"School culture and school climate are useful terms for the intangibles that can affect learning. As such, they deserve serious attention in the effort to improve performance."

Brink Practice Briefs (2004). *Putting the pieces together: School climate and learning*

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Understanding Culture and Climate to Support the School Planning Process

Closing Remarks

"Even in a school free of weapons, children may feel unsafe and unhappy. And that's reason enough to rethink our assumptions, redesign our policies, and redouble our commitments to creating a different kind of educational culture."

Kohn, A. (2004). *Rebuilding school culture to make schools safer*. *Educational Horizons*.

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Understanding Culture and Climate to Support the School Planning Process

Closing Remarks

"What makes a good school? In today's public schools, where diversity is vast and complex, a good school must provide a strong functioning culture that aligns with a vision of purpose. Good schools depend on a strong sense of purpose and leadership. ... To build a culture that is integral to school life, leaders must gear students, faculty, staff and administrators in a common direction and provide a set of norms that describes what they should accomplish."

Arredol, A. & Merita, V. (2009). Building a learning community: The culture and climate of schools. The Coosawatomie Project, Version 1.2.

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