

IV. Evaluation:

What is this? Teaching and learning in schools is ‘driven’ by what is measured. Safe and civil schools measure the social, emotional, ethical and civic as well as “academic” aspects of school life. In addition to measuring school climate and state indicators (e.g. discipline referrals) educators have an opportunity to consider how to measure student social, emotional and civic learning.

Why is it important? What is measured is “what counts”. Comprehensive school safety efforts—by definition—need to recognize the social, emotional, ethical and civic as well as academic dimensions of school life. This data provides invaluable information for school leadership teams to monitor and improve school climate. In addition, comprehensive school climate assessment is a powerful strategy to recognize student, parent and school personnel “voice” and build authentic learning communities.

Common barriers:

- ✓ School leaders believe that they do not have time to measure anything other than the three spheres that are now required: reading and math scores and physical violence incidents.
- ✓ School leaders use “home grown” school climate surveys that are not reliable or valid.
- ✓ School leaders do not understand how to use these assessments as a method to build authentic learning communities as well as how to (1) understand SEE findings; (2) “dig deeper” (3) prioritize goals and (4) collaboratively develop an action plan.

Key learning’s that staff need to understand and be able to do:

Learning objectives

- To consider the advantages and disadvantages of your school’s current measurement efforts.
- To learn about the range of tools/measures that school can use to measure school climate
- To learn about how school climate measurement can be used as an organizing process to promote safe and civil schools as well as social, emotional, ethical and academic learning.
- To learn about the five stages of the school climate improvement process.
- To learn how to develop an SEE team to oversee this function. How are these teams chosen and trained?

Tasks that need to be considered to actualize this process:

Reflecting and raising awareness about:

- ✓ Current school assessments: What is measured? Why? Strengths and limitations?
- ✓ The power of “measurement” in our lives as educators, students and parents.
- ✓ How do we “know” what we think we know?
- ✓ “Readiness” and the series of important steps that school leadership teams need to consider making evaluation a useful process.

Critically evaluating resources and making recommendations about:

- ✓ To learn about the range of ways that school climate can be evaluated: focus groups; surveys; observational methods.
- ✓ To learn about how to use school climate findings as a spring board for community building and SEE action planning: (1) fostering understanding about school climate (or other social, emotional, ethical and civic) assessment findings; (2) “digging deeper” to more fully understand school climate findings; (3) prioritizing goals; and, (4) action planning.
- ✓ Evidence based instructional and systemic programmatic efforts (U.S. Department of Education; CEP; CASEL: Blueprints, University of Colorado).
- ✓ Case study resources: learning from other practitioners’ experiences (common barriers, solutions, best practices).
- ✓ To learn about the five stages of the school climate improvement process in the following ways: What is each stage? Why is it important? Common barriers? Tasks? Indicators of success.

Skill building:

- ✓ To be able to read school climate reports and lead groups through the process (1) understanding about school climate (or other social, emotional, ethical and civic) assessment findings; (2) “digging deeper” to more fully understand school climate findings; (3) prioritizing goals; and, (4) action planning.
- ✓ Being able to engage school and parent leaders to foster high parent participation in school climate assessments.
- ✓ Being able to learn and teach with other “evaluation coordinators” (in person and via the internet) to share common barriers, solutions and best practices.

Indicators that a school is successfully focusing on this goal and related methods: That your school is working to measure the SEE as well as academic dimensions of school life in comprehensive and scientifically sound ways. And, that your school has a leadership team that understands how to (1) further ‘readiness’ for evaluation, (2) establish a “no fault” framework, and, (3) to use evaluation findings to further understanding, “digging deeper’, prioritizing and action planning.

How to measure it – Recommendations: The school is or is not measuring the SEE aspects of school life.

Additional Resources: We have listed some resources in the text above. Here are additional resources that may be helpful. Please let us know what other resources you have found helpful and would like us to share with other educators (jonathancohen@csee.net)

Books and papers:

Bar-On, R. & Parker, J. D. A. (Eds.). (2000). *Handbook of emotional intelligence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Beland, K. (2003). *Eleven Principles Sourcebook: How to Achieve Quality Education in P-12 Schools*. Washington, DC: Character Education Partnership

Centers for Disease Control (2005). *School health index*. Retrieved November 2, 2005 from apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi/Default.aspx

Cohen, J. (2006). Social, emotional, ethical and academic education: Creating a climate for learning, participation in democracy and well-being. *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2, Summer, pg 201-237.

Cohen, J. & Pickeral, T. (2007). Measuring and Improving School Climate: A Commentary. *Education Week*, April, 18, 2007, Vol. 26, No. 33, pages 29-30.

Devine, J. & Cohen, J. (2007). *Making your school safe: Strategies to Protect Children and Promote Learning*. New York: Teachers College Press

Elias, M. J., Zins, J. E., Graczyk, P. A. & Weissberg, R. P. (2003). Implementation, sustainability, and scaling up of social-emotional and academic innovations in public schools. *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 303-319.

Elias, M., Zins, J. E., Weissberg, R. P., Frey, K. S., Greenberg, M. T., Haynes, N. M., Kessler, R., Schwab-Stone, M. E., & Shriver, T. P. (1997). *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: A Guide for Educators*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Felner, R. D., Favazza, A., Shim, M., Brand, S. Gu, K. & Shim, N. (2001). Whole school improvement and restructuring as prevention and promotion: Lessons from STEP and the Project on High Performance Learning Communities. *Journal of School Psychology*, 39(2) 177-202.

Geher, G. (Ed.) (2004). *Measuring emotional intelligence: Common ground and controversy* (pp. 111-142). Hauppauge, New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Kress, J. S., Norris, J. A., Schoenholz, D. Elias, M. J., & Siegel, P. (2005). Bringing together educational standards and social and emotional learning: Making the case for educators. *American Journal of Education*, 111(1), 68-89.

Lickona, T, Schaps, E, & Lewis, C. (1996). *The eleven principles of effective character Education*. Retrieved August 23, 2003 from

http://www.character.org/site/c.gwKUJhNYJrF/b.993263/k.72EC/The_Eleven_Principles.htm

Osher, D, Dwyer, K. & Jackson, S. (2003). *Safe, Supportive, and Successful Schools: Step by Step*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West

Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. (Eds.) (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zins, J., Weissberg, R.W., Wang, M.C. & Walberg, H. (Eds.). (2004). *Building School Success on*



social emotional learning: What does the research say? NY: Teachers College Press.