



## **Roles and Responsibilities: Building Positive Schools Climate and Providing Learning Supports for Students**

Clearly delineating roles and responsibilities represents an essential step that can build capacity that supports sustainable school reform efforts.

Superintendent and Executive Staff: District leaders support the vision for promoting positive school climates and the social and emotional health of all students in the following ways:

- Inform and educate the School Board and ensure the development of a shared vision and commitment of this vision and its link with students' development academic success.
- Support the coordination and integration of school climate and comprehensive learning supports systems within district- and school-level improvement efforts.
- Promote the integration of social, emotional and civic learning into existing curriculum as well as civic engagement through service-learning and other practices.
- Support school climate assessment using valid and reliable tools that directly contribute to strategies and resources that are integrated into school improvement plans.
- Encourage and support family and community partnerships to contribute to a enrich positive school climates
- Promote professional development opportunities that educate and facilitate school climate reform and the delivery of effective learning supports.
- Provide adequate and protected resources to ensure that school climate is an essential component of the school accountability system the vision can be achieved.
- Provide ongoing forums (e.g., principal meetings) for discussion with district and school staff to review progress, challenges and solutions, and improvements.
- Provide support to ensure effective implementation and sustainability of the school climate improvement process in schools.

Principals: Administrators agree to support the vision for promoting positive school climates and the social and emotional health of all students in the following ways:

- Provide leadership and ensures access to adequate resources to explicitly and systematically promote positive school climate and to provide comprehensive and coordinated learning supports for all students.
- Ensure that the School Leadership Team is engaged in the school climate reform process which includes building support and fostering ownership for the improvement process from all stakeholders; assessing the perceptions of staff, students, and families; setting priorities based upon needs; and incorporating specific evidenced-based practices and programs to address those needs within the school improvement plan.

- Designate a school climate coach (see below) who is dedicated to collaborating with other school staff, parents, and community agencies to lead the school climate improvement process, promote social and emotional learning, civic engagement, and the provision of learning supports.
- Encourage professional development for all staff related to improving school climate and addressing students' barriers to learning.
- Support teachers' active engagement in school climate improvement efforts and the delivery of evidence-based practices and programs to support the healthy development of students' social and emotional health.
- Share successes and lessons learned with other principals and district leaders.
- Incorporate school climate and learning support topics in school-wide in-services.
- Encourage the active engagement of families and community agencies in addressing the social and emotional health of all students.
- Sustain a safe, quality, inclusive and engaging school climate.

School Climate Coach<sup>1</sup>: The School Climate Coach (SCC) develops and implements a comprehensive school-wide strategy to promote positive school climate and to address social, emotional, and behavioral barriers to learning. The SCC establishes and maintains collaborative working relationships with school personnel, students and their families, social service and counseling agencies, public and private associations, and businesses in the community in order to form partnerships and service plans to meet the needs of all students and their families. The strategies and services include those targeting all students (universal) as well as those targeting students at greater risk and/or exhibiting specific risky behaviors (e.g., bullying) and mental health issues. The SCC supports the school community in the following ways:

- Establishes a positive collaborative working relationship with school administrators, faculty, and other school personnel.
- Serves on the school's leadership team to ensure the integration between teaching and learning and students' social and emotional well-being.
- Provides the structure and accountability for the development and coordination of services and activities within each school aimed at improving school climate and addressing barriers to learning.
- Consults with the school's support personnel such as the school counselor, psychologist, social worker, behavior specialist, etc. to assess the needs of students and to ensure that students who are at-risk and/or experiencing issues are receiving appropriate school- and community-based services.
- Collects information about from multiple sources and stakeholders about the school environment including perceptions of relationships, students' and school personnel's needs to inform the school improvement process and the provision of services.

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<sup>1</sup> Many schools already have someone – an assistant principal, school counselor or teacher – who is in an overlapping role (e.g. PBIS coordinator; safety coordinator). Although the title ("school climate coach") does not matter, it is essential that there is clarity about who will be coordinating these efforts.

- Collaboratively develops a comprehensive intervention plan tailored to the school's needs that promotes the use of evidence-based programs and practices and that can be directly connected to the school's improvement plan.
- Provides in-service training to school staff on positive youth development, school climate, and specific student behavioral problems.
- Provides technical assistance to teachers and other school staff related to program implementation of effective programs and practices (e.g., PBIS, service learning, advisory curricula).
- Serves as the liaison between the school and community-based service providers. Meets regularly with service providers to facilitate collaboration and to maximize school improvement efforts.
- Provides outreach and education to parents and the community in general to facilitate parent and community positive engagement with the school and to promote understanding/value of positive school climate and addressing barriers to learning.
- Ensures inclusive opportunities for students to be engaged in the school climate improvement process.
- Work with other school climate coaches to document successes and challenges as well as to identify best practices.
- Frequently reports to the principal and leadership team on the progress, challenges, strategies and impacts of the school climate improvement process.

#### Classroom Leaders/Teachers:

- Model pro-social behavior in interactions with peers and students.
- Use non-punitive, developmentally appropriate classroom management strategies.
- Employ pedagogic strategies (e.g. conflict resolution, peer mediation, service learning, moral dilemma discussions) and curricula that strengthen social, emotional, ethical and civic learning and skill development (e.g., problem solving, relationship skills, self-management, social awareness).
- Work collaboratively with peers through teaming and communities of practice.
- Participate in professional development opportunities to strengthen awareness of and ability to respond appropriately to situations that negatively impact school climate (e.g., bullying) and to students' barriers to learning.
- Effectively engage all students to be critical contributors to the school climate improvement process.
- Effectively engage parents and community partners to contribute to the school climate improvement process
- Provide feedback and welcome reactions from other teachers, coaches, staff and administrator to enhance school climate knowledge and skills

#### Parent Leaders:

- Identify effective strategies to engage all parents in the school climate improvement process.
- Provide constructive feedback to school administrators to identify opportunities to improve parent engagement for all parents.

- Participate on school leadership teams .
- Engage families in the school community to communicate the value of positive school climate and the importance of their feedback to the school improvement process.
- Help to develop and co-lead family engagement projects aligned with school needs.

#### School Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Etc.:

- School counselors provide leadership and are central collaborative implementers of the vision to support students' social and emotional well-being.
- Collaborate across school-based disciplines as well as with community service providers to create comprehensive systems of care to promote youth skill development and to address barriers to learning.
- Provide in-service information and technical assistance to teachers and other school personnel to promote positive school climate and to appropriately respond to students' barriers to learning.
- Seek and use feedback from students, teachers, staff and administrators to enhance their support for a safe, quality, inclusive and engaging school climate.
- Engage parents and families as partners in addressing the social, emotional and behavioral health of students.

#### Community Partners/Providers:

- Learn about and support school-wide improvement efforts that further effective social, emotional, ethical, and civic instruction, to provide a seamless experience for students before, during, and after school.
- Support the school's efforts to promote student engagement/leadership and service-learning, building on existing "best practice" activities already operating at the school or in the community.
- Support parent/guardian engagement projects that grow out of the school climate assessment process.
- Model tenets of school climate improvement by using collaborative, consensus, no fault decision-making processes with school staff and other partners.
- Participate in the school climate improvement team, as appropriate, and promote its efforts among all the partner's on-site staff and volunteers.
- Partner with the school to provide evidences-based programs and practices onsite during and outside of school time to develop skills, build resiliency, and to address specific barriers to learning students may experience.
- Provide insights and strategies to more effectively engage community partners in developing and sustaining a safe, quality, inclusive and engaging school climate.

Student leadership: By definition, school climate improvement efforts are grounded in the idea and reality of all members of the school community need to be co-learners and leaders. Although student leadership is listed last here, it could and perhaps should be listed first. Although the principal needs to be "the" ultimate leader of school climate ( and any and all other) improvement efforts, there is a range

of ways that school climate improvement efforts can and need to be co-led by students including the following:

- Being a member of the school climate improvement team;
- Being actively engaged as co-learners and leaders developing a shared vision about what kind of school “we” want our school to be;
- Implementing effective strategies to engage all students in the school climate improvement process.
- Co-developing norms and agreements that provide a foundation for safety, trust, collaboration, learning and teaching;
- Helping to identify effective ways to celebrate past success and continuously improve student engagement and school climate improvement efforts;
- Reflecting on the process of (i) planning and preparation, (ii) evaluation, (iii) action planning, (iv) implementation, and (v) re-evaluation and the process of beginning the cycle anew and offering insights into enhancement of efforts by all stakeholders;
- Participating in the evaluation of school climate including identifying/developing measurable elements of a safe, quality, inclusive and engaging school climate.
- Actively supporting parents and guardians to complete the school climate assessment surveys;
- Taking a leadership role in recognizing the “voice” of community members in the school climate assessment process and presenting them to community members;
- Understanding the evaluation findings and strategies to enhance a safe, quality, inclusive and engaging school climate;
- Digging deeper into discrepant school climate findings (e.g. adults report that safety is a mild issue for students but students report that it is a severe issue) by taking a leadership role conducting participatory action research;
- Prioritizing instructional and/or systemic improvement goals;
- Developing an action plan;
- Implementing the action plan, importantly including helping to develop or strengthen service-learning as a vital aspect of school life
- Frequently reporting on the status of the school’s climate and contributions they are making and support/resources they need to actively engage in the school climate improvement process.

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