



## PARENT AND EDUCATOR GUIDE TO SCHOOL CLIMATE RESOURCES





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

April 10, 2019

Dear Parents and Educators,

Tragic events in recent years underscore the need for school to be a safe and positive learning environment for every student. In the absence of a safe and positive learning environment, a student may feel disconnected, disregard consequences, and engage in bullying or other destructive behaviors. These conditions can foreshadow acts of violence or criminality. However, through dedicated attention and strategic effort, school can remain a positive, supportive place in which every student feels safe, welcome, and connected.

In order to help those closest to students—parents, classroom teachers, school leaders, and others—to create and maintain a safe and positive learning environment for all, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) offers the attached Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources (Guide).

The purpose of the Guide is to provide general information about the concept of school climate improvement, suggestions for leading an effective school climate improvement effort, and additional resources for those interested in more information.

In addition to distributing this Guide, the Department supports two technical assistance centers that offer free assistance on improving school climate: (1) the National Center of Safe and Supportive Learning Environments ([www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov](http://www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov)), and (2) the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)). Enclosed with this document is an appendix that lists additional resources.

Should you have any questions, please contact Paul Kesner, Director of the Office of Safe and Supportive Schools, at [paul.kesner@ed.gov](mailto:paul.kesner@ed.gov).

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of America's children.

Sincerely,

/s/

Frank Brogan  
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education

/s/

Johnny Collett  
Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative  
Services

# A Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources



April 10, 2019

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## **Background**

Following the tragedy at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in February 2018, President Donald J. Trump announced the establishment of the Federal Commission on School Safety (Commission), chaired by Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos.

The Commission was tasked with providing meaningful and actionable recommendations to keep students safe at school. It examined a range of issues, including access to mental health support services in schools, best practices for securing school facilities, and the training and use of school resource officers (SROs). Included in the Commission's final report was the recommendation for the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to identify resources and best practices to assist schools in improving school climate.

The Parent and Educator Guide to School Climate Resources (Guide) is intended to provide parents, teachers, administrators, and other interested parties with a general understanding of school climate, school climate improvement activities, and the availability of additional resources. It should serve as a starting point from which the reader may choose to do further research; ultimately, it may result in the identification of practices or strategies a school, district or State may wish to implement. This document does not impose any new requirements on schools, districts, or States or convey any rights or additional responsibilities.

The document includes Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), several examples of school climate improvement activities from the field, a discussion of a contemporary, rigorous research study, and an appendix that lists additional resources.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the purpose of this document?

The purpose of the Guide is to provide the reader with a general understanding of school climate, how to initiate or expand school climate improvement activities, and the availability of additional resources, including two technical assistance centers supported by the Department, which both offer extensive and free online materials for public use.

### 2. Who is the audience for this document?

The audience for the Guide is parents, teachers, school leaders, district administrators, and State education officials. Although the Guide discusses school climate improvement activities at the school level, its suggestions could be scaled district-wide, or State-wide.

### 3. What is “school climate”?

The Department’s National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments describes school climate as follows:

*School climate reflects how members of the school community experience the school, including interpersonal relationships, teacher and other staff practices, and organizational arrangements. School climate includes factors that serve as conditions for learning and that support physical and emotional safety, connection and support, and engagement.<sup>1</sup>*

### 4. What is a “positive school climate”? What is “school-climate improvement”?

The Department’s National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments describes a *positive* school climate as follows:

*A positive school climate reflects attention to fostering social and physical safety, providing support that enables students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards as well as encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.<sup>2</sup>*

A positive school climate characterizes a school that effectively attends to all the social, emotional, and academic support needs of its students.

“School climate improvement” is the strategic effort undertaken by a school to achieve a positive school climate, by considering its practices, systems and structure. Best practices

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. (2016). Quick guide on making school climate improvements. Washington, DC, 1

[https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE\\_SCIRP\\_QuickGuide508%20gdc.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE_SCIRP_QuickGuide508%20gdc.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

for a school climate improvement effort include engagement with stakeholders and the collection and review of relevant data.

5. How is a school's student discipline policy related to school climate and school climate improvement?

School climate is a reflection of how an individual experiences school. Since a student discipline policy undoubtedly affects how members of the school community experience the school, it influences school climate. Additionally, the student discipline policy affects several other important and measurable indicators of school climate (such as student attendance, number of disciplinary infractions, number and type of disciplinary actions, etc.) As such, schools or districts will often choose to review or update the student-discipline policy as part of a larger effort to improve school climate.

However, there is no requirement that student discipline policy be reviewed, updated, or changed as part of a successful school climate improvement effort. Rather, the frameworks discussed in this document recommend the use of data and stakeholder engagement to guide decisions regarding the selection and implementation of improvement activities.

For example, should the data suggest a revision to the student-discipline policy is worth considering, and the stakeholder engagement indicates support for such an approach, then it would be appropriate for the school to consider changes. In a different scenario, should the data suggest and the stakeholder engagement support a different remedy to help improve school climate—for example, hiring more social workers to intervene earlier with at-risk students—that too would be appropriate and require no change to the discipline policy.

The establishment of a student-discipline policy at a school is a responsibility for the school, district, or State, and should account for the many different factors present at any given school. This document describes general strategies for improving school climate and does not endorse any particular type or method of student discipline policy or practice.

6. What is the Department's role regarding school climate?

The Department supports two technical assistance centers that provide free technical assistance and support to States, districts, schools, and the public on school climate and related topics:

- The National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) is funded by the Department's Office of Safe and Healthy Schools (OSHS), a division of the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE).
- The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS TA Center) is jointly funded by OESE and the Office of Special

Education Programs (OSEP), a division of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).

The NCSSLE focuses on improving student supports and academic enrichment by providing technical assistance and disseminating resources to States, districts, and schools. It publishes the School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP). SCIRP is a suite of manageable, action-oriented, and evidence-based resources for improving school climate. Its website is [www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov](http://www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov).

The NCSSLE may be considered a resource for designing a strategic effort to improve how students, families, teachers, and other school staff experience a school, as well as how school-related activities affect student attendance, learning, and achievement.

The PBIS TA Center helps States, districts, and schools build capacity for implementing a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavior support. Its website is [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

Please note that the use of PBIS is associated in part with students with disabilities, given its inclusion in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). For a student with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others, the IDEA requires that an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team consider the use of PBIS (and other strategies to address that behavior.) However, the use of PBIS is not limited to students with disabilities; in fact, it is considered an effective framework for supporting the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development of all students.

Beyond its two TA centers, the Department is responsible for ensuring that States, districts, and schools comply with the provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (hereafter ESEA) and the IDEA. The ESEA suggests the use of “school climate and safety” as a measure of school quality or student success in statewide accountability systems. For any school identified as in need of comprehensive support and improvement, ESEA requires a plan developed by the Local Educational Agency (LEA) based on a school-level needs assessment, in which the use of school climate data would be appropriate. The IDEA references the need to provide positive behavioral supports and interventions to children with disabilities whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others.

7. What does the research show regarding positive school climate improvement efforts?

Research shows that when schools and districts focus on improving school climate, students are more likely to be engaged, to develop positive relationships with each other



and adults, and to demonstrate positive behaviors.<sup>3</sup> Research has shown that the benefits of an improved school climate include measurable improvements in student performance on assessments, graduation rates, and attendance. Research further suggests that a positive school climate can improve students' grade point average.<sup>4</sup> A positive school climate can also lead to a reduction in the drop-out rate and to higher reported rates of teacher satisfaction.<sup>5</sup>

Conversely, research indicates that schools with negative school climates adversely affect student health, wellbeing and achievement. Negative, hostile or disorderly school climates can result in fear and avoidance, which in turn leads to negative effects on attendance, student learning and participation in student activities.<sup>6</sup>

8. How does the use of “exclusionary” student discipline fit within school climate improvement?

As acknowledged by the final report of the Commission, it is important for teachers and schools to have the flexibility they need to impose appropriate discipline and maintain order in the classroom, whether that is through use of “inclusionary” or “exclusionary” student disciplinary practices.<sup>7</sup> The use of “inclusionary” student disciplinary practices (e.g., peer mediation) or “exclusionary” student disciplinary practices (e.g., out-of-school suspension) remains at the discretion of the school, district, and/or State, consistent with all applicable Federal laws, including Federal civil rights laws. Best practices for developing a school climate improvement program would suggest that a decision regarding the use of specific disciplinary practices be informed by collection and analysis of the relevant data and through meaningful stakeholder engagement. There is no expectation that a school climate improvement effort must exclusively use “inclusionary” student disciplinary practices nor “exclusionary” student disciplinary practices.

9. What if my school has never attempted a school climate improvement effort?  
What if my school has already started a school climate improvement effort?

The information in this document is intended to provide helpful recommendations to begin, sustain, or expand school climate improvement activities. Schools at any stage of

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<sup>3</sup> American Institutes for Research/US Department of Education National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (2017) School Climate Improvement Action Guide for District Leaders. Washington, DC. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/actionguidedistrictwhole.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Wang, W., Vaillancourt, T. Brittain, H.L., McDougall, P., Krygsman, A., Smith, D., Cunningham, C.E., Haltigan, J.D., & Hymel, S. (2014). School climate, peer victimization, and academic achievement: Results from a multi-informant study. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29(3), 360-377. <https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fspq0000084>

<sup>5</sup> Osher, David. American Institutes for Research/US Department of Education Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center. “Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and its Measurement” (Webinar) November 30, 2011. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/making-case-importance-school-climate-and-its-measurement>

<sup>6</sup> Greg Chen & Lynne A. Weikart (2008) Student Background, School Climate, School Disorder, and Student Achievement: An Empirical Study of New York City's Middle Schools, *Journal of School Violence*, 7:4, 3-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15388220801973813>

<sup>7</sup> Federal Commission on School Safety. “Final Report of the Federal Commission on School Safety”, December 18, 2018, Washington, DC. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/school-safety/school-safety-report.pdf>

school climate improvement efforts will be able to use the information shared within the document.

10. What is a framework for a school to plan, implement and evaluate an effective program of school climate improvement?

The School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP)<sup>8</sup> is a suite of manageable, action-oriented, and evidence-based resources that States, districts, and schools can use to make school climate improvements. These free tools provide a standard framework for planning and implementation of school climate improvement, which may be adapted to fit the local context, as well as data collection surveys and other diagnostic instruments to measure the impact of such an effort.

The following information is compiled from various resources available to the public as part of the SCIRP, including the School Climate Improvement Reference Manual<sup>9</sup> and the Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements.<sup>10</sup>

Within its School Climate Improvement Reference Manual (Reference Manual), The NCSSLE describes 5 activity sets (sets of overarching activities that help guide readers to more specific, individual activities) by which a school can effectively plan, implement and evaluate its school climate improvement effort. The sets of activities are:

- Planning for school climate improvements;
- Engaging stakeholders in school climate improvements;
- Collecting and reporting school climate data;
- Choosing and implementing school climate interventions; and
- Monitoring and evaluating school climate improvements.

Schools and districts that successfully improve school climate most often engage in all five sets of activities.<sup>11</sup> Although each activity set has its own unique purpose, a school may wish to first select the activity set most relevant to it at that moment; it does not necessarily need to follow the activity sets strictly in the order provided. Additionally, some activity sets are likely to overlap with one another.

Included within each activity set are action steps (the broad actions that make up the activity set) and specific objectives (specific benchmarks within each action step). Within each objective, there is a purpose (reason/relevancy for objective), strategies (short and long-term methods by which to realize the objective), and related resources.

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<sup>8</sup> The SCIRP is free and publicly available at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about>.

<sup>9</sup> Yoder, N., Darling-Churchill, K., Colombi, G. D., Ruddy, S., Neiman, S., Chagnon, E., & Mayo, R. (2017). School climate improvement reference manual. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/reference-manual>

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. (2016). Quick guide on making school climate improvements. Washington, DC.

[https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE\\_SCIRP\\_QuickGuide508\\_0.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE_SCIRP_QuickGuide508_0.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 2.

For example, within the first activity set “Planning for School Climate Improvement,” the first action step is “Action Step 1: Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements.” Action Step 1 includes seven discrete objectives. The first objective is to “Engage key leaders in making school climate improvements.” The objective has both a stated purpose and includes several strategies for realizing the objective. See below:

**ACTIVITY SET 1: Planning for School Climate Improvement**

**ACTION STEP 1. Develop a Plan for Making School Climate Improvements**

**OBJECTIVE 1.1.1: Engage key leaders in making school climate improvements.**

*Purpose:*

Key leaders are important; they guide the direction of the school, identify priorities, and direct resources to those priorities. It is important to engage these key leaders to identify their perception of needs; elicit and address their questions and concerns; gain authorization; and, when necessary, create a sense of importance or urgency. It also is important to clearly identify roles and responsibilities as you engage your key leaders in school climate efforts.

*Strategies:*

- Identify the benefits of launching a school climate initiative for different members of your school community (e.g., school, students, families, staff, and communities).
- Initiate discussions with leaders and key staff that include schools’ specific needs related to supporting school climate as it relates to district or school priorities.
- Consider who can champion the work at the leadership level.
- Consider what the anticipated barriers to obtaining buy-in may be, how barriers can be overcome, why the school climate work should be done, and who will be responsible for each piece of the work.

(Source: Yoder, N., Darling-Churchill, K., Colombi, G. D., Ruddy, S., Neiman, S., Chagnon, E., & Mayo, R., 12-13)

Therefore, given the organization and format of the Reference Manual, Objective 1.1.1 may be fully considered with the understanding of the intended purpose of the objective, its relative place as part of the larger strategic goal (developing a plan for making school climate improvements), and the tactical steps necessary to realize the objective (i.e., promote benefits, initiate dialogue, anticipate barriers).

The overall result is that the Reference Manual serves as a framework of objectives, strategies, and resources for any school, district, or State to implement a school climate improvement effort, from any starting point, whether basic or advanced.

11. Is there a condensed version of the School Climate Improvement Reference Manual? Are there audience-specific versions, such as a guide for parents?

The NCSSLE published a “Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements” (Quick Guide),<sup>12</sup> which condenses and summarizes the extensive information presented in the Reference Manual for ease of use. The Quick Guide distills the dozens of objectives covered under each of the five activity sets in the Reference Manual into the most essential activities.

For example, the Quick Guide, Activity Set 1 (“Planning for School Climate Improvement”) now includes seven “Key Things to Do,” such as developing a core planning team, creating a vision and logic model, planning for data collection, and planning to differentiate supports, among others.<sup>13</sup> This document contains much of the same detail as the Reference Manual, but with the added benefit of a format that is user-friendly and written in language that is accessible for a wide audience.

There are also a series of “School Climate Action Guides”<sup>14</sup> in which the information and the strategies for school climate improvement are presented for a specific audience, including:

- District leaders,
- School leaders,
- Instructional staff,
- Non-instructional staff,
- Families,
- Students, and
- Community partners.

These audience-specific guides provide insights on how each respective group (for example, parents or students) can uniquely support school climate improvements, given their unique place or position held in the school community.

12. What interventions should be used as part of a school climate improvement effort?

One of the most important elements in the framework for designing and implementing a school climate improvement effort is the selection of which intervention(s) to use. Often,

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<sup>12</sup> The Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements is free and publicly available at [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE\\_SCIRP\\_QuickGuide508\\_0.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE_SCIRP_QuickGuide508_0.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Quick guide on making school climate improvements, 4.

<sup>14</sup> School Climate Action Guides are free and available at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/action-guides>

a school will already use some form of intervention to support its students, and a school may choose to use existing interventions (particularly when they align with the needs identified through stakeholder engagement and data collection). In addition, it is important to ensure that, when considering the use of existing interventions, such interventions are available to all students in need and are implemented with fidelity to the school climate improvement plan.

The NCSSLE framework for school climate improvement recommends the use of multi-tiered approach to organize interventions, in which the first tier (Tier 1) provides a foundation of universal supports for all students, the second tier (Tier 2) provides extra support for those students in need of extra assistance, and the third tier (Tier 3) provides intensive support for those who most need it.<sup>15</sup> For example, Tier 1 supports could be integrated into classroom instruction, Tier 2 supports could be applied in small group settings, and Tier 3 supports could be used in 1-on-1 sessions between a counselor and a student.<sup>16</sup> It is important to remember that a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is not a program or intervention itself; but rather, a system of organizing programs or interventions so that they are delivered appropriately to students.<sup>17</sup> Selection of interventions should be aligned to both the potential application and differentiated need in the multi-tiered system.

### 13. What about the use of evidence-based interventions?

There are many different types of interventions that a school may choose to use in a school climate improvement effort. Ideally, interventions should be evidence-based, in order to ensure that limited resources are only used on practices that have some proof of effectiveness. The ESEA describes different levels of evidence when defining the term evidence-based interventions, including:

- Strong evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented experimental study,
- Moderate evidence from at least one well-designed and well-implemented quasi-experimental study, and
- Promising evidence from at least one well designed and well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias<sup>18</sup>

Although there is no Federal requirement governing the use of evidence-based interventions in a general school climate improvement effort, the statutory definition may be useful, as it is both permissive of rigorously researched practices as well as emerging, promising practices that may not yet have been subject to an experimental study. If a

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<sup>15</sup> Yoder, N., Darling-Churchill, K., Colombi, G. D., Ruddy, S., Neiman, S., Chagnon, E., & Mayo, R., 136.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 22

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, Collaboration for Safe and Healthy Schools: Study of Coordination Between School Climate Transformation Grants and Project AWARE. Washington, D.C., 2017, 4. <https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/school-safety/school-climate-transformation-grants-aware-full-report.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> See ESEA Section 8101(21)(A).

school chooses to use an intervention that aligns with the levels of evidence described above, it may also be eligible to use certain Federal funding to support the evidence-based intervention, including ESEA section 1003 funds.<sup>19</sup>

Please note that many different programs at the Department could generally support school climate improvement activities; for example, Title I, Part A of the ESEA, Title IV, Part A of the ESEA, etc. For more information about specific activities which may be supported through use of Federal funds, you may wish to contact your district or [State's](#) Federal programs director or the [relevant program office at the Department](#).

There are several publicly available databases that can help with the identification of evidence-based and effective interventions. These include the Department's What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), managed by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) (available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>), and the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) (available at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>). Both organizations conduct research, publish studies, and offer training and support related to evidence-based practices in education. Another resource is the Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center (EBP) from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (available at <https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>).

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<sup>19</sup> U.S. Department of Education, "ESEA Section 1003 Funding for School improvement and ESEA Section 1003A Director Student Services" (Webinar) July 18, 2018, 15  
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/1003awebinarandpresentation.pdf>

## Research Discussion: Restorative Practices

**Overview:** Restorative practices have been promoted as a research-based approach to improving school climate, with multiple states and school districts across the country implementing various forms of these practices in their classrooms. Emerging from the restorative justice model utilized in the criminal justice system, restorative practices do not have one precise definition, but broadly refer to a non-punitive approach to handling conflict in the school setting. Common elements of restorative practices range from informal and affirmative practices, such as the use of affective statements to convey how the behaviors of others affect an individual's feelings, to more formal practices, such as restorative conferences or mediation in response to serious incidents.

In 2014, Pittsburgh Public Schools received a grant from the National Institute of Justice, the research agency of the U.S. Department of Justice, to implement and evaluate restorative practices, titled "Pursuing Equitable and Restorative Communities", or PERC. The district's motive for implementing restorative practices was to improve student safety and reduce suspension rates, specifically targeting disparities in suspension rates that existed between African-American students and White students.

**Study:** RAND Corp. conducted a randomized controlled trial, the first rigorous evaluation of restorative practices, to analyze the implementation, impacts, and sustainability of PERC for the Pittsburgh Public School system during the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 school years. Administrative data was obtained from the district and county, while additional data was collected through surveys, staff interviews, and observations in select schools.

### Key Findings:

- Positive effects on teachers' perceptions of teaching and learning conditions, and a majority of surveyed staff believed their relationships with students had moderately or greatly improved.
- Reduction in the overall use of suspensions and amount of learning time lost to suspensions, with significant reductions occurring for African American students, elementary school students, and female students. (There were no significant reductions for White students, middle school students, or male students.)
- No significant change on the number of suspensions for serious infractions involving violence or weapons, or on the percentage of students arrested at school.
- Negative effects on academic achievement for African American students and among all middle schools students, and overall negative effects on Math achievement.
- Negative effects on students' ratings of teachers' classroom management practices related to safety and discipline, and on students' overall assessment of teacher performance.
- Most staff identified "time" as the greatest barrier to implementing restorative practices, while some indicated a lack of clarity on the connection between the use of restorative practices and traditional discipline.

**Take away:** The effect of restorative practices on Pittsburgh Public Schools vary considerably by student subgroup and include positive, neutral and negative effects. Although the findings reveal potential positive benefits of restorative practices, which therefore merits consideration, it also highlights the importance of evaluating school climate improvement efforts through the use of multiple measures, as a single measure alone may not reveal the full impact.

The results of the study would suggest that school leaders should identify trade-offs that may exist with any intervention designed to improve school climate. Outreach and engagement with all relevant stakeholders can be critical to weighing different interventions and determining a plan of action that reflects the values and priorities of the school community.

(Source: Augustine, Catherine H., John Engberg, Geoffrey E. Grimm, Emma Lee, Elaine Lin Wang, Karen Christianson, and Andrea A. Joseph, Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions? An Evaluation of the Impact of Restorative Practices in a Mid-Sized Urban School District. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018. [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR2840.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2840.html))

#### 14. How should I use data to inform my school climate improvement effort?

Research suggests that there are five helpful steps when using education data for strategic decision-making and action: identify the question and the data necessary to answer, examine the data for patterns, analyze the patterns for causes, develop a response plan, and monitor progress.<sup>20</sup>

In order to improve school climate, there must first be the ability to measure school climate.<sup>21</sup> Further, measurements of school climate should be multi-faceted, recognizing the number and diversity of influences on the overall school climate. For instance, using attendance data alone, or number of incidents reported alone, may be insufficient to fully represent a school's climate.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, survey instruments are most effective when they capture responses from a sufficiently representative group of students (or all students).

Once collected, the use of data becomes an important part of the development and refinement of a school climate improvement plan. For example, the selection of which interventions to use may respond to patterns identified in the data. Further, the use of data can help to identify how effective the interventions truly are.

Lastly, it is recommended that school climate data be collected and analyzed on a defined, recurring interval, so that the overall progress toward improving school climate is regularly evaluated. Data may also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of individual components of the plan.

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<sup>20</sup> Kekahio, W., & Baker, M. (2013). Five steps for structuring data-informed conversations and action in education (REL 2013-001). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific. [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2013001.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2013001.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Osher, David. "Making the Case for the Importance of School Climate and its Measurement" (Webinar).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.



15. What survey or diagnostic tools are available to measure school climate, and/or the results of school climate improvement efforts?

The Department created the Education Department School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS),<sup>23</sup> which are free survey and diagnostic tools available for public use. The primary goal of the EDSCLS platform is to provide a no-cost, user-friendly, high-functioning platform that schools, districts, and States may use to administer a suite of school climate surveys.<sup>24</sup>

The surveys cover a wide range of topics related to school climate, including questions concerning school engagement, school safety, and school environment. The EDSCLS includes four distinct surveys for each of four respondent groups—students in grades 5–12, parents or guardians, the instructional staff, and the non-instructional staff (including principals) in schools—in order to gain an understanding of school climate across multiple relevant stakeholder groups. The EDSCLS was also designed to minimize the effort required to conduct the survey, compile and analyze the data, and produce reports on the results.<sup>25</sup>

When schools, districts, or States choose to use the EDSCLS in concert with the SCIRP, it allows for the development of a strategic school climate improvement plan informed by relevant school climate data, with the opportunity to measure effectiveness of the improvement strategies and overall progress through future administrations of the survey tool.

### **Program Spotlight: School Climate Transformation Grants**

As schools and districts across the country work to improve behavioral outcomes and learning conditions for students, the Department supports these efforts by awarding funds through the School Climate Transformation Grant Program. Grants are awarded competitively to states and local education agencies to support schools as they implement a multi-tiered behavioral framework. Since 2014, \$45 million has been awarded to 21 states and \$175 million has been awarded directly to 71 school districts. The Department anticipates inviting applications for new awards under this program in the future.

Updates on upcoming competitions can be found on the program webpage at <https://www2.ed.gov/programs/schoolclimatelea/index.html>

<sup>23</sup> The EDSCLS is free and publicly available at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students, Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS), Washington, DC, 2018, 1. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/EDSCLS\\_UserGuide\\_Nov2018.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/EDSCLS_UserGuide_Nov2018.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 1.

The Institute of Education Science (IES) is currently conducting an evaluation to study the impact of providing training in the multi-tiered systems of support framework on school staff practices, school climate, and student outcomes. Data from the 2015–2016 through 2018–2019 school years are being collected and analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of how schools implement the multi-tiered framework, and how these activities affect students and student sub-groups. The first report for the study is expected in 2019 and will be announced on <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/>.

Highlighted below are strategies that various grantees implemented to transform their school climates, and some of the positive outcomes that were realized.

### **Appleton Area School District, Wisconsin**

Appleton Area School District (AASD) is a large urban district in Wisconsin serving over 16,000 students. Through implementation of the multi-tiered behavioral framework, schools in AASD have shown steady progress in improving school climate. An increasing number of their 23 schools are experiencing reductions in office discipline referrals (ODRs), while AASD has experienced an overall reduction in the number of suspensions due to alcohol and weapon related incidences. Additionally, 87% of elementary and high school students have received 0-1 referrals and 85% of middle level students have received 0-1 referrals, significant reductions from prior years

AASD directly measures school climate through student/teacher perception surveys. Current survey results in the area of teacher/student relationships indicate that 81% of students agree that there is a strong social connection between teachers and students within and beyond the classroom. All 23 schools in AASD have reached fidelity of implementation for their Tier 1 school-wide PBIS implementation and 22 schools have met fidelity for Tier 2, targeted interventions for students demonstrating need of additional support. Targeted interventions include the use of a daily Check in/Check out system, where select students meet with an adult before and after the school day for structured feedback and encouragement. The district continues to build system capacity for supporting students with intensive behavioral needs, with 9 schools implementing Tier 3 intensive and individualized supports. AASD has allocated additional resources to Tier 3 coaching to build further implementation and fidelity.

During the course of the grant, AASD has increased collaboration with community partners, including mental health providers, truancy/runaway centers and the local Boys and Girls Club. These partnerships have led to increased access to mental health and alcohol/substance services as well as improvements in truancy issues in several schools through their Tier 2 intervention systems. Training all staff in restorative practices as well as trauma-informed care has allowed AASD to integrate expanded supports through their multi-tiered PBIS systems.

## **Laconia School District, New Hampshire**

The Laconia School District, located in the Lakes Region of New Hampshire, serves approximately 2,000 students in preschool through high school across five schools. Children living in Laconia are some of the State's most vulnerable, experiencing a high number of community and home risk factors that adversely affect school performance and social-emotional development. More than 60% of students receive free or reduced lunch, 6% of students are considered homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act, and there is a higher than average rate of students with disabilities, transience, and high rates of students involved in the juvenile justice system.

The School Climate Transformation Grant facilitated Laconia's implementation of PBIS in all five schools, and has supported PBIS staff positions and coaches. Laconia has also leveraged other funding sources to support its multi-tiered system of supports, coordinating with its PBIS efforts under the grant.

To date, Laconia has seen a 50% reduction in Office Discipline Referrals (ODR) across the district and an increase in the percentage of students with 0-1 ODRs in all schools. More students are receiving school-based mental health services onsite as part of Laconia's Tier 2 targeted and Tier 3 intensive supports. Additionally, the school district has observed a threefold increase in family engagement by increasing the number of in-home visits from school social workers and by offering new parent education and engagement events.

### 16. What can I do to ensure my school climate improvement effort is sustainable over the long term?

A 2018 research study conducted by the Department, of school districts awarded Federal grants related to improving school climate and increasing access to mental health services, found that a broad challenge to effective implementation was lack of clear planning and coordination. The study describes the challenge below:

*In many districts and schools, educators implement, sustain, and evaluate multiple innovations, initiatives, programs, or practices at the same time. Challenges inherent in this process include the potential for redundancy, misalignment, ineffective implementation, and excess burden on human and financial resources.*<sup>26</sup>

When describing strategies to help mitigate those challenges, a common suggestion was to prioritize sustainability at the earliest stages of planning. For example, as early as possible, establishing a team to help with coordination, clarifying goals, and mapping resources to avoid redundancies were all recommendations.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development, Policy and Program Studies Service, Collaboration for Safe and Healthy Schools: Study of Coordination Between School Climate Transformation Grants and Project AWARE. Washington, D.C., 2017, 31.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 36

In addition, a common lesson cited by study participants was the importance and value of communication, including helping stakeholders understand needs and goals, and connecting those goals to the school district’s mission and other initiatives and strategies.<sup>28</sup>

In general, the sustainability of a school climate improvement effort likely depends on several different factors, including the availability of financial and human resources, availability and effectiveness of professional development and training, and integration of school climate improvement efforts into overall strategic planning and mission.

Therefore, planning early and proactively for the sustainability of a school climate improvement effort is essential. By considering sustainability in the early planning stages, it is easier to identify strategies and practices that are not only effective but have long-term sustainability. Further, proactively planning for sustainability can help organize short-term versus long-term strategies, make best use of limited resources, and define levels of commitment over time.<sup>29</sup>

17. What is Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS), and how does it relate to school climate and school climate improvement?

PBIS is a framework that utilizes a multi-tiered continuum of supports to benefit the academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competence of all students. PBIS helps “improve behavioral and academic outcomes by improving school climate, preventing problem behavior, increasing learning time, promoting positive social skills, and delivering effective behavioral interventions and supports.”<sup>30</sup>

PBIS is a framework by which a school could implement a school climate improvement effort. Like the NSCCLE framework, PBIS relies on the use of data, a multi-tiered system of supports, and evidence-based practices. In general, multi-tiered systems of support such as PBIS, response-to-intervention (RtI), and multi-tiered behavioral frameworks (MTBF) share some of the following core features:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid, 36

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Adolescent Health, Building Sustainable Programs: The Resource Guide. Washington, D.C., 2014, 3. <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/sustainability-resource-guide.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (October 2015). *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint: Part 1 – Foundations and Supporting Information*. Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, 5. <https://www.pbis.org/blueprint/implementation-blueprint>

### PBIS Core Features

- *Implementation fidelity*: Structures and procedures are in place to help with early adoption and to ensure sustainable implementation.
- *Continuum of evidence-based interventions*: An integrated and sequenced organization of practices is developed so that:
  - A standard curriculum is provided for all students,
  - Modifications to curriculum can be made for students whose performance is identified as nonresponsive, and
  - A specialized and intensive curriculum is developed for students whose performance is deemed nonresponsive to the modified curriculum.
- *Content expertise and fluency*: School staff demonstrate the content knowledge, fluency, and experience necessary to support implementation of evidence-based practices and systems.
- *Leadership team implementation and coordination*: Implementation of evidence-based practices and systems is administered by a leadership team that includes school leaders, stakeholders, and content experts. This team is responsible for ensuring fidelity in implementation, resource management, and data-based decision making.
- *Continuous progress monitoring*: Performance is reviewed on a frequent and regular schedule to identify trends, measure student responsiveness, and adapt and modify supports.
- *Universal and comprehensive screening*: Performance of all students is reviewed regularly to assess:
  - Current level of progress,
  - Adequacy of progress,
  - Fidelity of support implementation,
  - Effectiveness of support, and
  - Need or change in supports.
- *Cultural and contextual relevance*: Implementation of evidence-based practices, systems, and associated data-based decision making are adapted to the context of the local culture.
- *Data-based decision-making*.

(Source: OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, *Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Implementation Blueprint: Part 1 – Foundations and Supporting Information*, 11-12)

PBIS practices may also be used independent of, or as a complement to, a separate school climate improvement effort. Schools may also nest PBIS practices within a larger school climate improvement effort.

## **School Focus: Integrating PBIS to Improve School Climate**

Schools across the country are implementing various elements of PBIS and integrating these practices with other tools and resources as they work to improve the school climate and enhance student behavior. Below are a few examples of schools that have combined the PBIS framework with additional climate improvement strategies and have seen positive student outcomes as a result of these efforts.

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### **Angel Oak Elementary School, Johns Island, SC**

Angel Oak Elementary School, located in Johns Island, SC, decided to partner with a community mental health agency to treat students in school in need of mental health services. This type of partnership, referred to as the Interconnected Systems Framework (ISF), was established and a clinician from the mental health agency became part of the school's multi-disciplinary team and began supporting students with both group and individual interventions. The school conducted universal screening to identify students in need of behavioral health services. Using these data along with other school and community data, a variety of interventions were selected to meet the individual needs of students, including Check In/Check Out, social skills groups, and modular cognitive-behavioral therapy.

School staff reported these efforts to be beneficial, enabling systematic communication and collaboration between education and mental health systems and students and families. Some preliminary outcomes include improved standardized test performance, with increases in math proficiency for all grades and in reading proficiency for grades 2 through 5. Angel Oak saw a reduction in the percent of students receiving unexcused tardies and absences after one year of ISF implementation from 61% to 20% and 89% to 35%, respectively. Additionally, parent engagement increased following ISF implementation, with the number of parents participating in the Parent Teacher Association increasing from 35 members in the 2016-2017 school year to 240 members in the 2018-2019 school year.

### **Charlotte Central School, Charlotte, VT**

At Charlotte Central School located in Charlotte, VT, after analyzing school-wide discipline data and realizing the need for additional universal social skills instruction and targeted instruction for students requiring more support, the PBIS Implementation Team integrated both Responsive Classroom/Second Step Curriculum and Developmental Design resources into its PBIS framework. Since integrating these resources, Charlotte Central has seen a significant reduction in serious behavior issues leading to Office Discipline Referrals. Referrals for major infractions during the 2017-2018 school year totaled 679, down significantly from a total of 914 during the 2016-2017 school year.

Additionally, the PBIS School Leadership Team revamped the school-wide acknowledgment system to reinforce positive behaviors and build relationships with the greater community. Students received a penny when demonstrating the school-wide expectations of Take Care of Ourselves, Take Care of Others, and Take Care of This Place. Pennies are added to a classroom collection jar, where a full jar leads to a classroom celebration and the deposit of pennies into the school-wide “penny bank” in the main lobby. When the school fills the school-wide “penny bank”, a school-wide celebration takes place and the pennies are donated to a local organization chosen by the students, reinforcing that positive behaviors have a positive impact on the broader community.

18. Where can I find additional resources?

The National Center of Safe and Supportive Learning Environments ([www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov](http://www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov)) and the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports ([www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)) provide free, additional information to support States, school districts, schools, teachers, parents, and the public.

In addition, this document includes an appendix with a list of all the resources referenced in the document as well as links to other relevant materials for further study on school climate and school climate improvement issues.

Please send any questions, comments or concerns regarding school climate or school climate improvement to the Department’s Office of Safe and Supportive Students, at:

Office of Safe and Supportive Schools  
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Room 3E-245  
Washington, DC 20202  
Phone: 202-453-6777  
E-mail: [OESE@ed.gov](mailto:OESE@ed.gov)

Please send any questions, comments or concerns regarding either (1) positive behavioral intervention supports or (2) serving students with disabilities, to the Department’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, at:

Communications and Customer Service Team (CCT)  
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Ave., SW  
Washington, DC 20202  
Phone: 202-245-7468  
E-mail: [OSERS1@ed.gov](mailto:OSERS1@ed.gov)

## Appendix



## Additional Resources

DISCLAIMER: These resources represent some examples of the research and materials currently available to the public on the topics of school climate. These may contain information relevant to state and local education leaders, school staff, parents, and students who are interested in learning more about school climate and school climate improvement. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Department, and the inclusion of references to these materials in this appendix should not be construed or interpreted as an endorsement of any kind.

**National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSL), Office of Safe and Healthy Schools, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, US Department of Education** <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/>

- **School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP),** <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about>
  - *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual.* This reference manual provides comprehensive lists of goals, strategies, outputs, and resources on improving school climate via planning, engaging stakeholders, collecting, analyzing and reporting data, identifying and implementing interventions, and monitoring and evaluating.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/reference-manual>
  - *Quick Guide on Making School Climate Improvements.* This guide provides the basics on what is involved in improving school climate, including descriptions of what it looks like when it is being done well, as well as pitfalls to avoid.  
[https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE\\_SCIRP\\_QuickGuide508\\_0.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NCSSLE_SCIRP_QuickGuide508_0.pdf)
  - *School Climate Improvement Action Guides.* These guides provide possible action steps for district leaders, school leaders, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, families, students, and community partners on how to support school climate improvements, tips on what it looks like when it is being done well and what pitfalls to avoid, and questions to ask to engage in the school climate improvement efforts.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/action-guides>
    - *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for District Leaders.* This document outlines possible key action steps that district leaders—superintendents, assistant superintendents, directors of student support services, or others—can take to contribute to improve school climate.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/actionguidedistrictwhole.pdf>

- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for School Leaders*. This document outlines possible key action steps that school leaders—principals, assistant/vice principals, or building leaders—can take to contribute to improve school climate. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguideschoolwhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguideschoolwhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Instructional Staff*. This document outlines key action steps that instructional staff—including teachers, paraprofessionals, and classroom aides—can take to contribute to improve school climate. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguideinstrstaffwhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguideinstrstaffwhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Non-instructional Staff*. This document outlines possible key action steps that non-instructional staff—including office staff, guidance counselors, social workers, school psychologists, bus drivers, maintenance and facility staff, and food service staff—can take to contribute to improve school climate. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguidenoninstrstaffwhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguidenoninstrstaffwhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Working with Families*. This document outlines examples of how family members, including guardians of students, can be engaged in the school climate improvements so that students are more successful. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguidefamilywhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguidefamilywhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Working with Students*. This document outlines examples of how students can be engaged in the school climate improvements so they are more successful. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguidestudentwhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguidestudentwhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Community Partners*. This document outlines examples of how community partners can support school climate improvements so they are more successful. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti  
onguidecompartwhole.pdf](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/acti<br/>onguidecompartwhole.pdf)
- *School Climate Data Interpretation Resources*. These materials are appropriate and recommended for all person(s) at your state, district, or school who will be most actively involved in the interpretation of the survey findings, translating the data into action, and communicating with those who will promote data-driven decision making for school climate improvement. [https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/data-  
interpretation-resources](https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/data-<br/>interpretation-resources)

- *EDSCLS School Climate Data Analysis Worksheet*. This tool provides examples of key questions schools administering the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) can utilize to guide analysis of their data. This tool can also be used to create documents describing the findings of the data that can be shared with stakeholders.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/datainterpretationworksheet.docx>
- *Data Interpretation Guide on Making School Climate Improvement*. This document contains detailed information and resources to help you interpret and use results from your school climate surveys. Measuring and understanding how students, staff, and parents/guardians perceive the climate in their schools are key steps in making wise decisions on how to use resources to focus on areas in need of improvement.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/datainterpretationguide.pdf>
- *Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides*. The discussion guides provide information to help in interpreting data for 13 school climate topics. Each discussion guide provides a brief description of the topic area, as well as initial and deeper guiding questions that assist in using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas, overall and by multi-tiered systems of support, as applicable.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/data-interpretation-resources>
- *Online Training Modules*. These six modules provide an opportunity to practice skills, including engaging leadership and other stakeholders, analyzing and collecting school climate data, and identifying interventions.
  - *Online Module 1: Understanding the Importance of School Climate and Engaging School Leadership in Its Improvement*. This module gives you an opportunity to apply key information about school climate to strategically engage leadership.  
<http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate1/story.html>
  - *Online Module 2: Engaging Staff, Students, and Families in Building a Positive School Climate*. This module gives you an opportunity to think through strategies for engaging staff, students, and families in improving school climate.  
<http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate2/story.html>
  - *Online Module 3: Putting Your Data in Context: A Big Picture View of School Climate*. This module guides users through a simulation activity using hypothetical data and a narrative to demonstrate how putting data and current school initiatives together can provide a picture of school climate.  
<http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate3/story.html>

- *Online Module 4: Integrating Different Data Sources to Understand School Climate.* This module gives you an opportunity to apply what you know about school climate to effectively organize data for action.  
<http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate4/story.html>
  - *Online Module 5: Sharing School Climate Data with Stakeholders.* This module focuses on possible strategies for presenting data effectively and gives you an opportunity to practice sharing data with key stakeholders who have an interest in improving school climate. <http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate5/story.html>
  - *Online Module 6: Selecting Evidence-Based Interventions to Improve School Climate.* This module provides a best practice process for choosing evidence-based interventions (EBI) to improve school climate and lays out a case scenario illustrating one school's consideration when choosing evidence-based programs to improve its school climate.  
<http://airhsdlearning.airws.org/schoolclimate6/story.html>
- **ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS).** The EDSCLS provide examples of helpful information on surveys that States, local districts, and schools can use to collect and act on reliable, nationally-validated school climate data in real-time.  
<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls>
- **Five steps for structuring data-informed conversations and action in education.** Kekahio, W., & Baker, M. (2013) (REL 2013–001). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific.  
[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL\\_2013001.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/pdf/REL_2013001.pdf)

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), US Department of Education Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

<https://www.pbis.org/>

- *Implementation Blueprint and Self-Assessment.* The purpose of the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Implementation Blueprint is to help guide leadership teams in the assessment, development, and execution of action plans. The outcome is the development of local capacity for sustainable, culturally and contextually relevant, and high fidelity implementation of multi-tiered practices and systems of support.  
<https://www.pbis.org/blueprint/implementation-blueprint>
  - *Foundational and Supporting Information.* The PBIS Implementation Blueprint is grounded in the behavioral and prevention sciences and emphasizes within a multi-tiered support system framework (a)

measurable outcomes, (b) evidence-based practices, (c) implementation systems, and (d) data for decision making.

<https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/PBIS%20Part%201%2018%20Oct%202015%20Final.docx>

- *Self-Assessment and Action Planning.* State, county, regional, and district leadership teams should regularly assess the status of factors or drivers associated with systemic implementation of the PBIS framework. Self-assessment results are used to develop and modify action plans designed to achieve local capacity for establishing and sustaining high fidelity implementation of the PBIS framework.

<https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/PBIS%20Implementation%20Blueprint%20Part%202%20Self-Assessment%202017-5-15.docx>

- PBIS Technical Guide on Classroom Data: Using Data to Support Implementation of Positive Classroom Behavior Support Practices and Systems  
<https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/PCBS%20Data%20Brief%2012.18.17.pdf>
- PBIS Technical Brief on Systems to Support Teachers' Implementation of Positive Classroom Behavior Support  
<https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/PBIS%20Technical%20Brief%20on%20Systems%20to%20Support%20Teachers%20Implementation%20of%20Positive%20Classroom%20Behavior%20Support.pdf>
- Brief Introduction and Frequently Asked Questions about PBIS  
<https://www.pbis.org/school/swpbis-for-beginners/pbis-faqs>
- Family Engagement and Partnership FAQ  
<https://www.pbis.org/family/faqs>

**Institute for Education Sciences (IES), US Department of Education Regional Education Laboratory Program (REL).** The ten Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) work in partnership with school districts, state departments of education, and other educational stakeholders to use data and research to improve academic outcomes for students. For more than 50 years, the RELs have collaborated with school districts, state departments of education, and other education stakeholders to help them generate and use evidence and improve student outcomes.

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/>

- *Selected Resources on Student Discipline.* RELs work in partnership with states and districts to 1) conduct original high quality research, 2) provide training, coaching, and technical support, and 3) disseminate high quality research findings to better understand their disciplinary data, including research studies that examine issues of equity and disproportionality.  
<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/discipline.asp>
- *Selected Resources on Early Warning Systems.* An important part of keeping students on track for graduation and postsecondary success is to identify and address problems before they grow into major obstacles. For that reason, many schools and school systems are implementing Early Warning Systems. These

systems use a wide range of data to identify students that are at risk, allowing educators to provide timely interventions and supports.

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/ews.asp>

- *Selected Resources on Data Use.* Educators and policymakers have access to data from many sources. A key challenge is how to best use the available data to inform decision-making. RELs work in partnership with states and districts to 1) conduct original high quality research, 2) provide training, coaching, and technical support, and 3) disseminate high quality research findings to improve data use.

[https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/data\\_use.asp](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/projects/data_use.asp)

**Institute for Education Sciences (IES), US Department of Education What Works Clearinghouse.** The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reviews the existing research on different programs, products, practices, and policies in education. The goal is to provide educators with the information they need to make evidence-based decisions. It focuses on the results from high-quality research to answer the question “What works in education?”

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center.** The Evidence-Based Practices Resource Center aims to provide communities, clinicians, policy-makers and others in the field with the information and tools they need to incorporate evidence-based practices into their communities or clinical settings. The Resource Center contains a collection of scientifically-based resources for a broad range of audiences, including Treatment Improvement Protocols, toolkits, resource guides, clinical practice guidelines, and other science-based resources.

<https://www.samhsa.gov/ebp-resource-center>

**Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE).** STRYVE is a CDC initiative to help communities prevent youth violence. Offers an interactive resource to help other communities across the country take a public health approach to preventing youth violence.

- *The STRYVE Strategy Selector Tool.* Provides access to evidence-based strategies that have prevented youth violence or changed risk and protective factors for youth violence in other communities.

<https://vetoviolence.cdc.gov/apps/stryve/detail/selection>

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Department of Justice (DOJ) Model Programs Guide.** The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention’s (OJJDP’s) Model Programs Guide (MPG) contains information about evidence-based juvenile justice and youth prevention, intervention, and reentry programs. It is a resource for practitioners and communities about what works, what is promising, and what does not work in juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, and child protection and safety.

<https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/>

- *Model Programs on School Climate.*  
<https://www.ojjdp.gov/mpg/Topic/Details/116>

**OFFDP, OJP, DOJ School Justice Collaboration Program: Keeping Kids in School and Out of Court.** The National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ) was awarded funding by OJJDP to support the School-Justice Partnership Project. The purpose of the project was to enhance collaboration and coordination among schools, mental and behavioral health specialists, law enforcement and juvenile justice officials to help students succeed in school and prevent negative outcomes for youth and communities.

<https://www.schooljusticepartnership.org>

- *School Justice Partnership Resources.*  
<https://www.schooljusticepartnership.org/library>

**The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL): Social and Emotional Learning Resource Library.** CASEL, a non-profit organization committed to making evidence-based social and emotional learning an integral part of P-12 education, offers a comprehensive collection of social and emotional learning (SEL) tools and resources to inform and support educators, researchers, policymakers, and parents who are leading this work in the field. Resources have been selected by CASEL staff, consultants, school district partners, field collaborators, and others.

<https://casel.org/resources/>

- *The CASEL Guide to Schoolwide SEL.* Provides a process for school-based teams to organize, implement, and improve SEL efforts, while providing specific tools and resources to support each step of the process.  
<https://schoolguide.casel.org/>

**The Wallace Foundation: Knowledge Center on Social and Emotional Learning (SEL).** As part of a six-year initiative to improve SEL practices across school and out-of-school settings, the Wallace Foundation gathers and disseminates evidence on the effectiveness of SEL programs to provide teachers and parents knowledge they can put into practice.

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/social-and-emotional-learning/pages/default.aspx>

- *Navigating Social and Emotional Learning from the Inside Out.* Provides in-depth information on 25 SEL programs, allowing practitioners to compare curricula and methods across the top SEL programs.  
<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/navigating-social-and-emotional-learning-from-the-inside-out.aspx>

**Character Lab: Playbooks.** Character Lab’s eight playbooks provide actionable resources for parents and educators to target and develop specific character strengths in children. Included in the playbooks are strategies to implement these practices in the classroom.

<https://characterlab.org/playbooks/>