

Positive School Climate

In alignment with TEC, §38.351(d) and the Safe and Supportive School Program and for the purpose of this guide, school climate is defined as the quality and character of school life as reflected in its norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures as experienced by the students, parents, school personnel, and members of the community.

Every member of the school community contributes to a positive school climate which results in people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe; being engaged and respected; and working together to develop and contribute to a shared vision. Positive school climate establishes an environment that supports both the non-academic (social, emotional, mental and behavioral health and wellness) and academic development of students. Establishing, improving, and maintaining a positive school climate takes a collective and deliberative effort by every member of the school community.

Campuses should align their work on school climate with the multi-tiered system of supports adopted by the local education agency (LEA). Each campus should develop and implement universal school-wide and classroom-wide strategies and supports, as well as targeted and intensive supports for identified students, to establish, improve, and maintain the school climate. To ensure consistency across all campuses, each LEA should provide guidance and access to resources and supports that facilitate campus efforts at addressing school climate.

Assessing School Climate and Planning for Improvement

Each year, campuses should collect and analyze data about the school climate to identify the gains they have made as well as opportunities for continued growth. The data should include:

- student, staff and parent perceptions of peer and adult relationships including bullying and cyberbullying awareness and prevention;
- teaching and learning practices;
- recruitment and retention of quality staff;
- student and staff engagement and connectedness to the school community; and
- safety at school.

To ensure school climate improvement efforts are effective and sustainable, each LEA and campus should annually consider the following questions:

- How have the LEA and the campus developed and refined a vision for a positive school climate? How has the vision been shared with campus stakeholder groups?
- What additional data does the campus need to assess its current alignment to the vision for a positive school climate?
- What is the process the LEA uses to recommend school climate survey instruments that the campus can use to collect school climate data from all stakeholder groups (students, staff, and parents)? How does the LEA and campus ensure the instrument selected provides the data needed to identify opportunities to move toward attainment of the vision?

- How does the campus administer the climate survey to ensure responses are received from all stakeholder groups? How does the LEA provide guidance and support to the campus for survey administration?
- How will school climate surveys be marketed to increase stakeholder engagement and solicit authentic representation of stakeholder perceptions?
- How will school climate data be analyzed and incorporated into the development of campus and district improvement plans?
- How will campus stakeholder groups be involved in the development of the plan to improve school climate? What will the campus/LEA do to ensure that all stakeholders are represented?
- How will the school climate data and plans for improvement be shared with campus stakeholder groups?
- How will the LEA support campuses in implementing the plan to improve school climate throughout the school year?
- What resources and campus/LEA initiatives are already available to support improvement in school climate (i.e., PBIS, Restorative Discipline Practices, Communities in Schools, Comprehensive School Counseling Program, Character Education Programs, local partnerships, etc.)? How will the campus/LEA align the initiatives with campus climate improvement goals so that campus effort has a compounding effect to achieve multiple goals?
- What resources are available to support mental health and wellness of teachers and other school staff members?
- How often during the school year will the campus formally collect school climate data? What are additional ways that the campus could informally monitor school climate improvement efforts and measure progress?

Improving School Climate

With guidance and support from the LEA, the campus should identify and use evidence-based practices and resources to promote improvement in school climate. To ensure the greatest success at improving school climate, all stakeholder groups should internalize the campus vision for improving the school climate and how the practices and resources are aligned to influence change. It is critical that stakeholders receive training and support in the use of these practices and resources and that the practices and resources are implemented with consistency and fidelity across the campus. Every member of the school community plays a significant role in establishing and maintaining a positive school climate.

To ensure that the implemented plan has the intended impact on school climate, campus leaders should consider the following at regular intervals throughout the implementation process:

- How are the campus vision, goals, and objectives for a positive school climate incorporated into the culture of the school and the daily activities of school community members? What are the actions that each school community member is expected to engage in to contribute to a positive school climate?
- How does the school ensure the effective implementation of the activities to improve school climate? How does the school monitor the engagement of the members of the school community?

- How is the multitiered system of supports (MTSS) framework used to support improvement in school climate? What are the school-wide and classroom-wide universal supports for all students? How will students be identified for targeted and intensive supports? What staff members will provide the support for those students? How will effectiveness of the supports be measured?
- What training and support will campus staff, students, parents, and community members need to implement the MTSS framework aligned to the school climate improvement plan? How and when will the training be provided? How will implementation be monitored? How will the campus address areas of ineffective implementation?
- How will the campus provide training and support for new members of the school community (staff, students, and family members) who join during the school year, after the initial training and implementation phase?
- How and at what frequency will the campus collect formative implementation data? How will the campus adjust practices and resources used to improve school climate?
- What strategies will the campus sustain the involvement of staff, students, parents, and school community members throughout the school year?
- How will the campus communicate progress on improving school climate to members of the school community including staff, students, parents, and community members?
- What are the ways that the campus/LEA celebrate successes in school climate improvement? How are stakeholders involved in the celebrations?

Sustaining a Positive School Climate

Each year, new students transition into and out of the school community, staff membership changes, and the needs of the community may evolve. These changes impact the social and cultural dynamics of the school community and require sustained effort in assessing, maintaining, and improving a positive school climate. LEAs and campuses should exert deliberate effort in assessing, planning, and implementing strategies, practices, and resources to support and sustain a positive school climate.

School Climate Resources

Information and resources on improving and sustaining positive school climate are available on the Texas Education Agency [Safe and Supportive School Program Webpage](#).

Year-at-a-Glance (YAG) Activities

The year-at-a-glance provides an overview of activities that campuses should engage in to address school climate each school year.

School Climate Year-at-a-Glance Activities

Initial Activities to Improve School Climate	(Specific Month)
The campus establishes a campus-based team that can influence change on the campus (TEAM). This team should include campus leadership, teacher leaders, parents and community members, and students (if appropriate).	
The TEAM establishes the vision and goals for a positive school climate.	
The TEAM analyzes school climate and other data (including student attendance and behavior, student discipline and removals, bullying and cyberbullying reports, academic achievement, teacher and other staff retention, community involvement, etc.) to assess the quality of the school climate.	
The TEAM reviews current initiatives and programs that support improvement of the school climate (bullying and cyberbullying instruction, counseling programs that address social and emotional domains, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, Restorative Discipline Practices, etc.).	
The TEAM identifies one to three areas of focus and develops a plan for staff, students, and community stakeholders which focuses on improving school climate using evidence-based practices and existing or added resources. The plan should include action steps, persons responsible, expected outcomes, timelines, training required for implementation, and metrics for success.	
During the Summer Recess	
TEAM membership is reviewed and vacancies due to staff attrition and student and family matriculation are filled.	
TEAM members determine their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the plan. TEAM members receive training to facilitate implementation of the plan.	
The campus administrative team schedules time during beginning of year (BOY) professional learning (PL) to train staff to use the practices and resources to improve school climate.	
The TEAM adopts a school climate survey to solicit input from students, staff members, and families. The TEAM determines how and when the climate survey will be administered to each stakeholder group.	
The TEAM and the LEA identify community partners (i.e. local university partners, churches, local mental health organizations, etc.) to support efforts at improving school climate and providing students with integrated student supports. Memorandums of understanding (MOU) are established in accordance with LEA policies.	
The TEAM develops and implements a marketing strategy to inform and garner support from parents and community stakeholders in the improvement of the school climate.	
Prior to the Start of School	
During the BOY PL, the TEAM conducts training sessions for campus instructional and support staff in the use of evidence-based best practices and resources to improve school climate and connects school climate improvement to the MTSS framework.	
Instructional teams (grade level, subject area, etc.) engage in collaborative planning sessions to develop age-appropriate evidence-based instructional techniques and strategies using the campus provided resources to teach and train students in procedures, routines, community building skills, interpersonal relationship skills, bullying and cyberbullying awareness and prevention, understanding emotions and self-regulation, general mental health and wellness, and any other practices related to improving school climate.	
The campus administrative team schedules time during the first two weeks of school for instructional staff to deliver the instruction and training related to improving school climate.	
The TEAM develops a mindfulness and wellness program to support staff emotional and mental health and well-being.	

The campus administrative team assigns staff members to a multidisciplinary team to implement the MTSS framework to monitor and provide resources and supports that facilitate the academic and non-academic development of students.	
First Two Weeks of School	
Instructional staff and other designated staff deliver the instruction and training to students related to improving school climate developed prior to the start of the school year.	
Campus administrative staff monitor the implementation of and student and staff response to the instruction and training related to improving school climate.	
All campus staff including instructional staff, support staff, and administrative staff monitor student behavior, interaction, and connectedness to the school community. Students receive redirection and reteaching in the instruction and training in improving school climate as needed.	
The TEAM develops an instructional plan, materials, and training (which may include video messages and modeling by other students) for students and families who enroll after the first two weeks of school.	
Within Each Nine Week Period of School	
Convene regularly scheduled multidisciplinary team meetings to review student data and develop targeted and intensive support plans that include academic instruction and integrated student supports and services that address school climate needs. Refer students to outside partners as needed for behavioral and mental health wellness.	
All campus staff including instructional staff, support staff, and administrative staff monitor student behavior, interaction, and connectedness to the school community. Students receive redirection and reteaching in the instruction and training in improving school climate as needed.	
Deliver the instructional plan developed in the first two weeks of school to newly enrolled students and their families.	
The TEAM monitors and evaluates staff emotional and mental health and well-being using formal and informal measures.	
The TEAM uses formal and informal measures to review progress on the plan to improve school climate focusing on implementation of the action steps, progress toward expected outcomes using predetermined metrics for success, and alignment to timelines for implementation. The TEAM identifies opportunities for adjustment, develops strategies to facilitate success, and communicates progress and adjustments to stakeholder groups.	
Prior to the End of the School Year	
The TEAM collects school climate data using the predetermined climate survey instrument(s) and other data (including student attendance and behavior, student discipline and removals, bullying and cyberbullying reports, behavioral threat reports and assessments, academic achievement, teacher and other staff retention, community involvement, etc.)	
The multidisciplinary team meets to review intervention and support plans and recommends next steps, including connections with community partners, for the summer recess to ensure continued support of students.	
The TEAM analyzes school climate and other data (including student attendance and behavior, student discipline and removals, bullying and cyberbullying reports, academic achievement, teacher and other staff retention, community involvement, etc.) to assess the quality of the school climate.	
The TEAM evaluates the attainment of the plan goals using the predetermined metrics for success and identifies new or continued areas of focus for future school climate improvement plans.	
The TEAM reviews and updates the vision and goals for a positive school climate.	
The TEAM reviews current and identifies new initiatives and programs that will help the school achieve school climate improvement goals.	
The TEAM calendars summer meeting dates to plan activities for the upcoming school year.	