

The Healthy Kids School Climate Survey (HKSCS) Data System

Improving Schools,
Academic Achievement, and the Engagement
of Students, Teachers, and Parents



What is it?

Why assessing school
climate is important

How it has been used and
made a difference

What have we learned



What is it?

- In California, the largest effort in the nation to provide schools/communities statewide with local data to promote school success and well-being.
 - 850 schools districts
 - 7,100 schools
 - 500,000 students annually
 - Required biannually for NCLB compliance
- Developed under funding from the California Department of Education by WestEd
- Identified as a model system by the US Dept of Ed



Four Components

- The Healthy Kids Survey (since 1999)
 - Known and used internationally as a cutting-edge school climate and resilience assessment tool
- Staff School Climate Survey (since 2004)
 - One of the assessment tools in the National Evaluation of federal Safe School/Healthy Students grantees
 - 3,000 schools across the nation
- School Parent Survey (new)
- Custom Module:
 - Not just a survey but a data collection system
 - Schools can select extra modules and add own questions to further meet their data needs.



The Framework

- Most school reform efforts focus on curriculum, instruction, and governance. However necessary, this is often not *sufficient*.
- Learning also affected by complicated set of nested “nonacademic” factors (e.g., environmental, health, social/emotional, developmental) embedded within the concept of school climate that must be addressed in a holistic fashion.
- Without addressing them, many students will be unable to fully benefit from “traditional” school reforms and to learn to their potential.
- The first step is assessing these school climate factors.



Why Assess?

- Estimated 40-50% of high school students disengaged
 - Major cause of student dropout.
 - Engaging students in learning the fundamental challenge to school reform (National Research Council, *Engaging Schools*, 2004:14)
- School connectedness and positive school climates consistently associated with both academic achievement and lower rates of health risks that are learning barriers.
- Unhealthy, unsafe, bullying conditions affect attendance and ability to concentrate on learning
- School climate among most important factors in whether teachers stay or leave.
 - 22% of new teachers in California quit within four years



Survey Goals

- Identify barriers and supports to effective learning, development, and well-being to guide program program
 - Data-driven decision-making
- Foster school climates that engage students, staff, parents
- Improve student achievement & graduation; teacher retention
- Promote healthy development and well-being
- Raise awareness of health-education connections
- Promote school-community collaboration in meeting identified needs of students
- Monitor progress in meeting needs



Core Content

Aligns with ED’s Model of School Climate Modains

- Academic standards and norms
- Engagement
 - School connectedness, learning motivation and readiness, truancy
- Relationships: caring, supportive, respectful
- High expectations
- Meaningful participation and decision-making
- Safety and order
 - bullying, crime, and violence
 - discipline



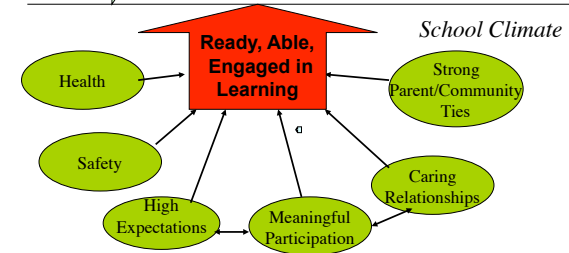
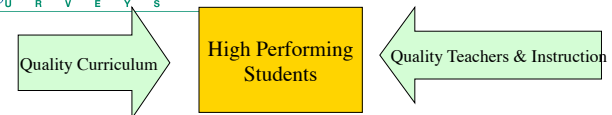
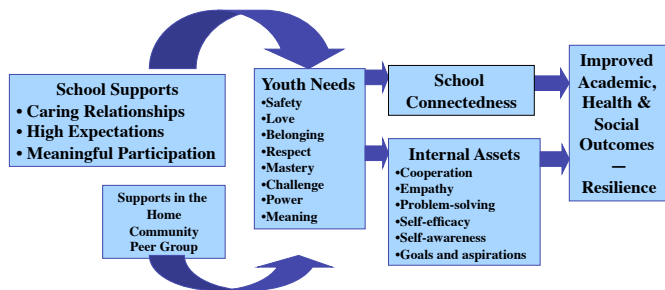
Core Content

- Student health and well-being (e.g., substance use, mental health, physical health, resilience)
- Equity, diversity, and cultural sensitivity
- Physical environment
- Services, programs, and supports

Essential Developmental Supports

- Caring relationships, high expectations, meaningful participation
- Research links to positive academic, personal, social, and health outcomes — even among youth in high-risk environments (resilience)
 - meet basic developmental needs necessary to optimally engage capacity to learn;
 - mitigate risk factors and reduce health risk behaviors that are learning barriers (protective factors);
 - foster internal assets needed to succeed;
 - promote school connectedness
 - thus improving achievement.

Developmental Framework for Learning & Well-being



A School Climate Model for Student Success

The California System



Reporting

- Main and key findings — district, county, state
- Supplemental reports (student and staff)
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Migrant education
 - Special education (staff only)
 - Service learning
- Public posting on websites (www.wested.org/chks and /cscs)
- School reports on request (c. 66%)
- Online access to key indicator data
- Datasets for analysis

Data Use Resources

- Major focus on data use to guide policy and practice
- On-call technical assistance and monthly workshops
- *Guidebooks* to survey content, interpretation, dissemination, and data application
- Online access for generating graphs and tables with selected crosstabs.

How Used — Local

- Identify and raise awareness of needs
 - Increase program support & attention
- Increased outside funding by demonstrating need
- Drill down to the school level
- Enhanced school-community collaboration
- County coordination of administration for comparability
- Enhanced data culture

How Used — State/Research

- Statewide norms to compare with local
- Monitoring of program compliance
- Factsheets and Research Reports
 - Subgroup characteristics; high-risk populations
 - Program differences (e.g., tobacco prevention, migrant ed)
 - Factors associated with academic achievement
 - Low- vs. high-performing students/schools
 - How variables inter-related
 - Guidance on meaning of results
- Dataset for research

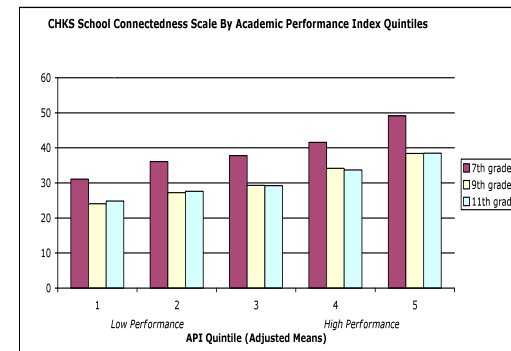
What We Have Learned



Student Data

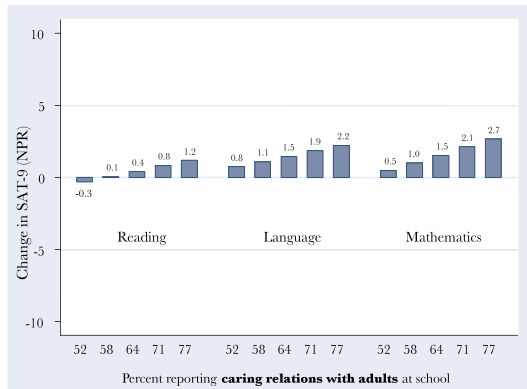
- Low-performing schools have poorer climate indicators than high-performing even after controlling for poverty and race/ethnicity
 - Higher in health-risk behaviors and lower in school developmental supports, safety, and connectedness.
- Test-score improvements over one year related to lower student health-risk behaviors and more positive climates.
- Continuation schools that beat the odds have higher learning supports and better climates but not resources.

School Connectedness by API



API school score based on annual test results. CHKS five-item scale assesses level students feel close to people, part of school, happy, safe, and treated fairly.

Caring Relationships and 1-Year Changes in Test Scores



Staff Data

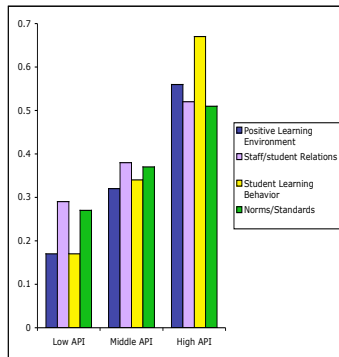
Between Elementary and High Schools:

- Decline in indicators of positive learning/teaching environment, by about half to one-third lower.
- Decline perception of student motivation to learn, attendance, and learning-related behaviors.
- Dramatic increase in severity of school problems from student health & behavior
- Increase in lack of safety
- Decline in practices, resources, & services to address these problems.

Source: Calif School Climate Survey for Staff, 2004-06 (n=67,464)



% High on Learning/Working Environment Scales and API



- As positive indicators rise, so do API scores.
- The biggest variation is in indicators of student engagement and learning-facilitative behavior

Source: CSCS, 2004-08 (n=67,464 staff)



Conclusion

- Efforts to improve schools need not only to address issues of curriculum, instruction, and governance, but also to foster positive environments that support and engage students, teachers, and parents.
- Schools need environments that are:
 - Safe, caring, participatory, and challenging;
 - Addressing health and behavioral impediments to learning readiness and capacity
- The first step is assessment
- Having data makes a difference

