

# AISD Central Office Climate Survey

## Executive Summary, Spring 2020

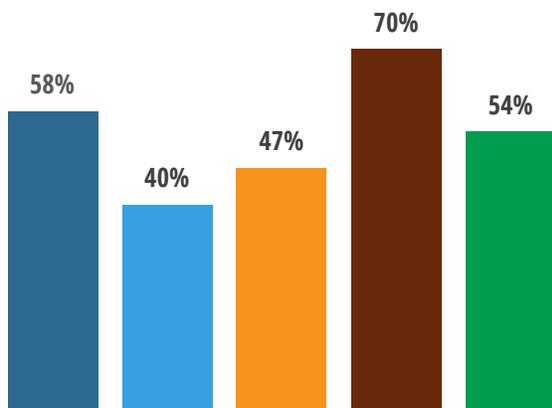
The purpose of the Austin Independent School District (AISD) Central Office Climate Survey is to ask Central Office staff for their perceptions and experiences of various aspects of their work environment. This includes but is not limited to district vision, level of respect between leadership and staff, general climate, and facilities and resources. The survey is administered through email every two years to all Central Office staff who are at least half-time employees. Survey data are then used to assess and monitor working conditions for each area/department and subdivision and for the overall district.

Central Office employees and those who worked on campuses but reported primarily to the Central Office (rather than a specific campus) first self-selected one of five major areas: academics and social and emotional learning, business and operations, human capital, technology learning and systems, and (for all remaining areas) “other.” Within the selected major area, respondents were then able to select a subdivision, and in some cases, a lower-level work area. Respondents were asked about climate at the district; major area; subdivision; and when applicable, the lower level work area.

Out of 1,571 targeted employees, 816 responded, making the overall response rate (52%), comparable to that of the last Central Office Climate Survey (54%) in 2017–2018. Response rates ranged from 40% to 70% for the various areas, with human capital having the highest response rate. The response rates by area are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1.

**In the 2019–2020 Central Office Climate Survey, Human Capital had the highest response rate, followed by Academics and Social and Emotional Learning, Other, Technology Learning and Systems and Business and Operations.**



Source. AISD Central Office Climate Survey 2019–2020

Note.  $n = 305$  for academics and social and emotional learning, 76 for technology learning and systems, 167 for business and operations, 90 for human capital, 178 for other, and 816 for the district overall.

As with the previous AISD Central Office Climate Survey, the majority of staff members responded they strongly agreed or agreed that AISD is a good place to work. In addition, the majority of staff members (96%) responded favorably to the question “I plan to stay in AISD next year.” One Central Office Climate Survey item was new for 2019–2020 and

## Central Office Climate Surveys

Since 2005, the AISD Central Office Climate (previously called Central Office Work Environment) Survey has been conducted to gather information about working conditions. This survey has continuously asked staff about interactions with other employees, morale, and whether staff agree or disagree (4-point Likert scale) with statements like “AISD is a good place to work.”

School district central offices are becoming more widely recognized for the role they play in school achievement.

Understanding the internal communication dynamics may provide insight as to how central office staff impact campus-based personnel. Since central offices are responsible for (among other things) curriculum, hiring practices, professional development, and evaluation, research recommends fostering healthy working conditions.

was crafted out of a response to program directors for the CARES (Customer-focused, Action-oriented, Responsive, Empathetic, and Service-driven) initiative. The question asked, “What makes you feel valued as an employee in AISD?” Respondents could select from a list of choices and pick as many as they liked. They could also write in their own response by selecting “other.” Results for this item are displayed in Figure 2. The percentages represent respondents who selected a given response option.

Figure 2.

**In 2019–2020, the top five reasons employees gave for why they felt valued were support from leadership, level of responsibility given over work, ability to contribute to department and colleagues, ability to make a positive impact on students, and being asked to provide their opinion on decisions.**



Source. AISD Central Office Climate Survey 2019–2020

Note. *n* = 680 for the “What makes you feel valued as an AISD employee?” item. Percentages represent respondents who chose a response option.

Data for the 2019–2020 Central Office Climate Survey were collected between February 11 and March 26, 2020. Therefore, data in this report reflect perceptions of Central Office climate before widespread school closures due to COVID-19. Also noteworthy, the location of AISD headquarters changed near the beginning of the school year (September 3, 2019), and ongoing construction projects may have influenced participants’ responses about facilities.

In an effort to maintain confidentiality, we only reported survey results with at least five responses for both individual items and disaggregated subgroups (e.g., departments, subdivisions). Without this respondent threshold, results from small groups of respondents might be discernable by individual staff. Although the surveys are not anonymous, we do ensure confidentiality.

Comprehensive AISD Central Office Climate Survey results for this year and last year can be accessed by (a) going to <https://www.austinisd.org/dre>, (b) selecting “interactive reports,” and (c) selecting Central Office Climate Survey Report 2019–2020 from the interactive reports list in the upper left-hand corner of the page.



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