

Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness Update, 2010–2011 to 2011–2012

What is the AISD Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness Initiative?

In an effort to improve the work environment for district staff and the educational experience for students, the Department of Educator Quality was charged with the goal of implementing a program designed to improve cultural proficiency and inclusiveness. According to the initiative's [website](#), cultural proficiency is when adults understand that their personal cultures and backgrounds impact others, including students in Austin Independent School District. Inclusiveness is showing respect, understanding and acceptance, and valuing diversity as an asset with the Austin Independent School District community. This report summarizes data from several district-wide surveys that are administered to monitor issues related to the initiative's goals.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY IN TEACHING

In Fall 2011, 2,386 central office and campus staff completed the [Teaching Diverse Students Survey](#) which was administered specifically for the Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness initiative. This survey consists of four subscales¹: shared beliefs (the degree to which the school community shares common beliefs and commitments related to diverse students' needs), professional expertise (the degree to which professional development opportunities address the needs of diverse students), actions of school leaders (the degree to which school leaders foster a campus community that addresses the needs of diverse students), and school policies and processes (the degree to which school policies promote the needs of diverse students). Data from the 2011–2012 school year were used as a baseline to determine whether the Cultural Proficiency and Inclusiveness initiative influenced AISD employees' perceptions of the districts' support for these issues.

¹For item-level subscale information, please visit <http://www.tolerance.org/tdsi/schools-survey>



About this report. This report includes data gathered from various district-wide surveys that address issues related to cultural competency. The items selected for this report measure the perceptions campus staff, central office staff, and students perceptions have of bullying; racial tension; discrimination; respect in the workplace, school, and classroom; sexual harassment; unsafe work practices; workgroup environment and school climate; teacher fairness; and cultural relevance of the curriculum. Longitudinal data are included when applicable.

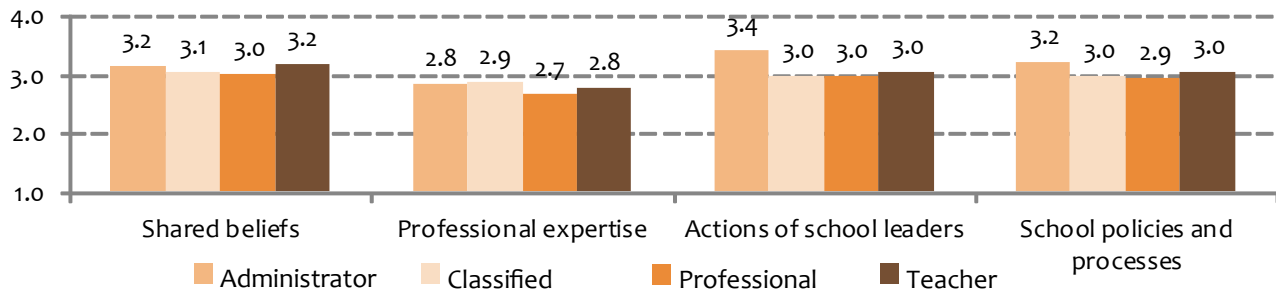
Surveys included in this report.

- Staff TELL AISD Survey (all campus staff)
- Central Office Climate Survey (all central office staff)
- Student Climate Survey (students in grades 3 through 11)
- Teaching Diverse Students Survey (all campus and central office staff)

For campus and district reports, please visit our [website](#).

In general, campus staff did not believe they have received adequate professional development opportunities designed to address the needs of their diverse students, as of Fall 2011. This survey is likely to be administered again in Fall 2013.

Figure 1. Teaching Diverse Students Survey campus subscales, by Campus Staff Employee Category.



Source. 2011-2012 Teaching Diverse Students Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Responses above 3.0 are considered desirable.

In Spring 2012, 7,292 campus staff completed the Staff Teaching, Empowering, Leading, and Learning (TELL) Survey. TELL items relevant to the goals of cultural proficiency and inclusiveness are included in this report. Responses in the tables represent the percentage of staff who strongly agreed or agreed with each statement. When applicable, negative differences (Δ) of 5 or more percentage points are noted with red shading. Many middle and high school campus respondents did not feel administrators consistently enforced their campus's rules of conduct.

Table 1. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about managing student conduct.

	High School			Middle School			Elementary School		
	2011	2012	Δ	2011	2012	Δ	2011	2012	Δ
Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.	80%	82%	2	85%	71%	-14	94%	91%	-3
Administrators consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	61%	65%	4	64%	53%	-11	83%	80%	-3
Teachers consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	66%	69%	3	76%	72%	-4	92%	91%	-1
Non-teaching staff consistently enforce rules for student conduct.	68%	72%	4	78%	73%	-5	90%	90%	0

Source. Spring 2011 and Spring 2012 Staff TELL AISD Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY WITH CAMPUS COMMUNITIES

Responses from elementary school staff suggested community engagement was favorable. However, less than two-thirds of middle and high school staff agreed that parents/guardians are influential decision makers on their campus.

Table 2. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about community support and engagement and managing student conduct.

	High School			Middle School			Elementary School		
	2011	2012	△	2011	2012	△	2011	2012	△
Parents/guardians are influential decision makers in this school.	63%	65%	2	59%	54%	-5	69%	70%	1
This school works directly with parents/guardians to improve the educational climate in students' homes.	77%	77%	0	74%	70%	-4	84%	84%	0
This school maintains clear, two-way communication with the community.	85%	86%	1	81%	78%	-3	88%	89%	1
This school does a good job of encouraging parent/guardian involvement.	85%	87%	2	83%	76%	-7	88%	89%	1

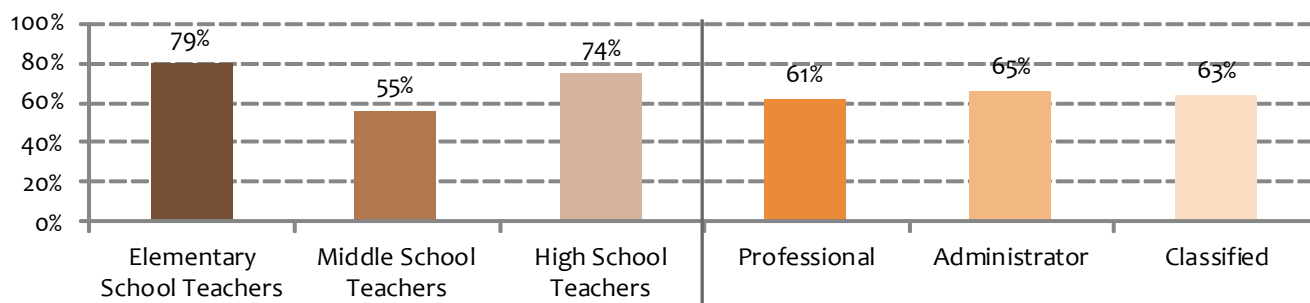
Source. Spring 2011 and Spring 2012 Staff TELL AISD Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY IN THE WORK PLACE

On the Staff TELL AISD Survey, campus staff were asked questions concerning their level of trust and respect in their workplace. In Spring 2012, 505 central office employees completed the Central Office Climate survey and were asked similar questions. Most staff members agreed that their work place fostered feelings of trust and mutual respect. However, more than one-third of central office staff did not agree. Additionally, when central office staff members were asked if the district fostered an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, most respondents disagreed (Figures 2 and 3). Although most campus and central office staff were comfortable raising issues and concerns important to them in their work group, more than one-quarter were not comfortable doing so (Figure 4). When asked to rate their overall work environment, most teachers and central office staff agreed that AISD was a good place to work (Figure 5).

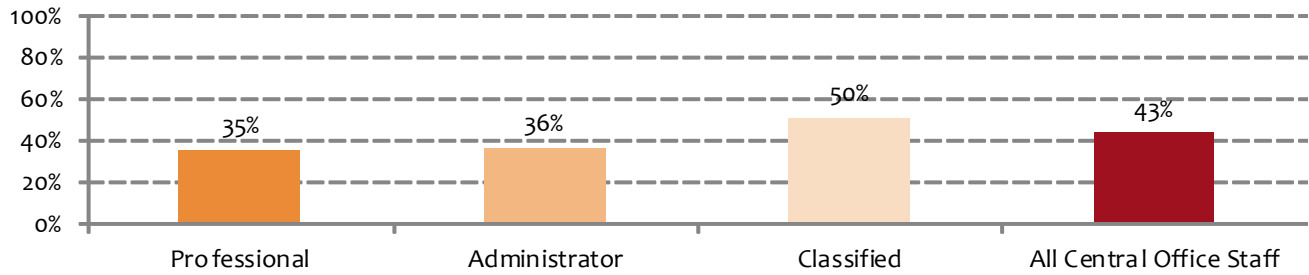
Figure 2. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect on my campus/in my work group.



Source. 2011-2012 Staff TELL AISD and Central Office Climate Surveys.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

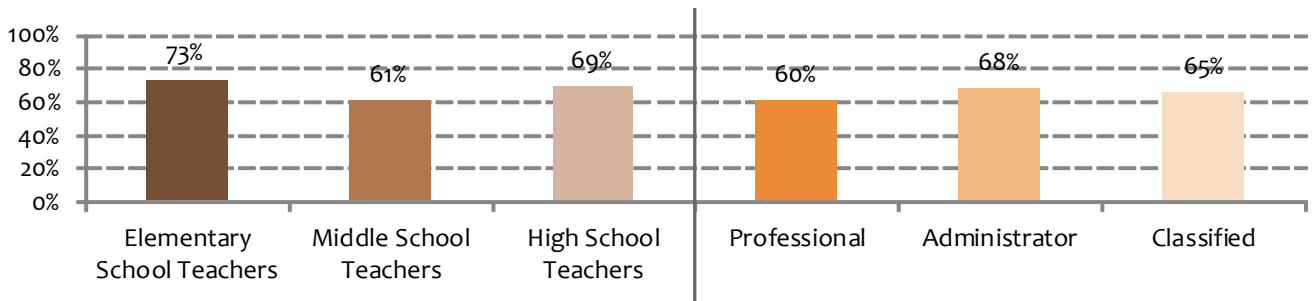
Figure 3. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect in this district.



Source. 2011-2012 Central Office Climate Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

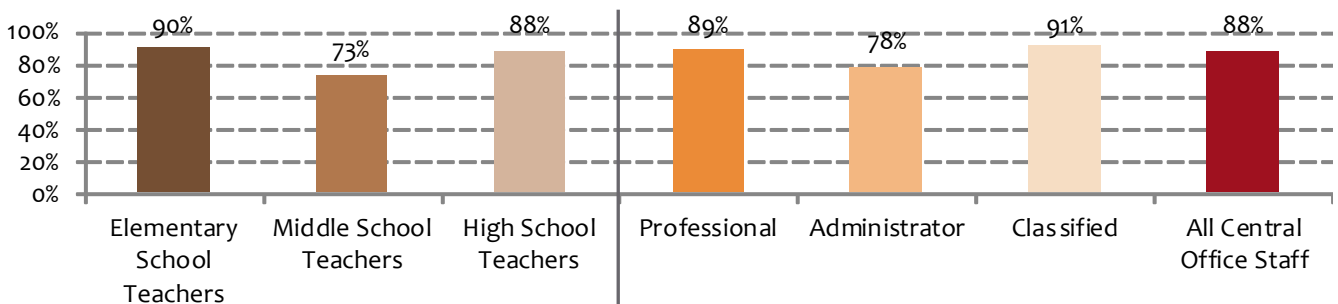
Figure 4. I feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to me.



Source. 2011-2012 Staff TELL AISD and Central Office Climate Surveys.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Figure 5. Overall, AISD is a good place to work.



Source. 2011-2012 Staff TELL AISD Survey item, "Overall, my campus is a good place to work and learn," and the 2011-2012 Central Office Climate Survey item, "Overall, AISD is a good place to work."

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with each statement.

Central office staff also were asked questions on the Teaching Diverse Students Survey regarding their perceptions of how the district promoted the needs of diverse students. Similar to campus staff, central office staff did not agree that they received adequate professional development opportunities focused on the academic performance of diverse students.

Table 3. Teaching Diverse Students Survey Items for Central Office Staff Only

	Mean of Central Office Staff Responses
1. Central office staff and administrators talk openly with one another about how to address issues relating to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ableness in our schools.	2.7
2. Staff and administrators in central office openly reject the idea that students cannot achieve academically because of conditions in their homes or communities.	2.7
3. Staff and administrators in central office believe that teachers can significantly influence students' motivation to learn.	3.4
4. Priorities for professional development for central office employees include substantive emphasis on gaps and discrepancies regarding the performance of different groups of students.	2.8
5. Professional development activities help central office staff and administrators investigate and understand how students' race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, ableness and language might be related to learning and behavior.	2.5
6. Central office administrators interact respectfully with all staff and make a special effort to engage those who may feel less comfortable or more vulnerable.	2.8
7. Central office administrators acknowledge differences among racial and ethnic groups at the same time that they encourage recognition of common values.	2.9
8. Central office administrators reinforce, by word and deed, the importance of intergroup collaboration.	2.8
9. Central office administrators ensure that efforts to improve interracial and intercultural understanding and competence are integral to core efforts to improve teaching and learning.	2.8
10. AISD has well publicized explicit and coherent policies that seek to ensure that all students and staff experience no discrimination based on ethnicity, race, language, social class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or ableness.	3.0
11. Central office staff and administrators honor and make use of languages of students, staff, and families who speak a language other than English at home.	2.9
12. Efforts are made to recruit and retain a racially, ethnically, and age-diverse school staff.	2.9
13. Multiple forms of data are continuously collected and assessed by central office staff and administrators to monitor possible racial, ethnic, gender, religious and ability level differences in student achievement, disciplinary actions, access to learning groups.	2.9
14. Family engagement strategies in AISD are well-developed and give particular attention to reaching out to and engaging culturally and linguistically diverse families.	2.7

Source. 2011-2012 Teaching Diverse Students Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Responses above 3.0 are considered desirable.

Importantly, most district staff knew the procedures for reporting sexual harassment and for filing a complaint. Additionally, only 21% of all district staff who completed the survey reported experiencing discrimination while employed at AISD (Table 4). The most common negative behavior reported by central office staff was disrespect for co-workers, experienced by 16% of central office respondents at least once a month (Table 5). Finally, 92% of central office staff agree that cultural diversity was respected in their work group.

Table 4. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about AISD procedures.

	Professional	Administrator	Classified	All Staff
I know the procedure for reporting sexual harassment.	70%	93%	84%	83%
I know the procedures for filing a complaint.	64%	91%	77%	77%
I have experienced discrimination while employed at AISD.	18%	24%	22%	21%

Table 5. Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Experiencing Negative Behaviors Once a Month or More, by Job Category.

	Professional	Administrator	Classified	All Staff
Racial Tension	4%	6%	5%	5%
Bullying	9%	14%	8%	10%
Disrespect for supervisors	15%	17%	11%	13%
Disrespect for co-workers	20%	16%	19%	19%
Discrimination	3%	5%	6%	5%
Sexual harassment	0%	1%	2%	1%

Table 6. Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about your work group.

	Professional	Administrator	Classified	All Staff
Cultural diversity is respected in my work group.	93%	93%	90%	92%
The opinions of employees in my work group are respected by employees in other areas.	79%	75%	76%	77%
The interactions among employees in my work group are cooperative.	94%	97%	85%	90%
The employees in my work group communicate with each other in an open and honest way.	82%	87%	77%	81%
Employees in my work group provide strong social support for each other.	81%	91%	75%	80%

Source. 2011-2012 Central Office Climate Survey.

Note. Response options ranged from strongly agree (4) to strongly disagree (1). Percentages represent the percent of respondents who agree or strongly agree with each statement.

CULTURAL PROFICIENCY IN LEARNING

In Spring 2012, students completed the student climate survey, which measures students' perceptions of their school environment. Responses at the middle school level were less favorable than were responses at the elementary and high school levels.

Table 7. Behavioral environment subscale averages, by school level and year.

Behavioral environment	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012
My classmates show respect to each other.	2.96	2.97	3.02	2.83	2.82	2.84	3.01	3.00	3.01
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.	3.11	3.12	3.20	2.79	2.79	2.82	2.94	2.96	2.98
I am happy with the way my classmates treat me.	3.13	3.17	3.22	3.16	3.17	3.21	3.30	3.28	3.31
Students at my school follow the school rules.	2.80	2.87	2.88*	2.48	2.52	2.52	2.66	2.69	2.71
My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to.	n/a	2.81	2.82	n/a	2.56	2.52	n/a	2.72	2.75

Source. 2009-2010 to 2011-2012 Student Climate Surveys.

Note. Response options ranged from always (4) to never (1). Responses above 3.0 are considered desirable.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, district staff and students were positive in their perceptions as measured by survey items related to cultural proficiency and inclusiveness; however, at the middle school level, campus staff and students were more negative than were their elementary and high school peers. Ongoing district-wide initiatives (e.g., the No Place for Hate® training), along with additional training provided by the cultural proficiency and inclusiveness initiative, might help increase awareness and collaboration across the district. Indeed, campus and central office staff would like to receive additional professional development opportunities to address these issues. Taken together, responses to these surveys highlighted areas in which AISD was culturally proficient, and areas in which the district must improve.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Meria J. Carstarphen Ed.D.

OFFICE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

William H. Caritj, M.Ed.

DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Holly Williams, Ph.D.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mark Williams, President • Vincent Torres, M.S., Vice President
Lori Moya, Secretary • Cheryl Bradley • Annette LoVoi, M.A. • Christine Brister •
Robert Schneider • Tamala Barksdale • Sam Guzman



Please contact the author(s) for permission to reproduce portions of this report if it is not used in its entirety.