



Austin Independent School District

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SUMMARY OF 2005-2006 THROUGH 2007-2008 AISD STAFF CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS

A healthy school climate is characterized by positive relationships among students, all campus staff, and the community. School climate is a key factor in several important outcomes such as student achievement, reduced violence, higher morale, and faculty trust (Hoy, Smith, & Sweetland, 2002; see also Schmitt, 2006).

The AISD Staff Climate Survey has been administered to AISD campus staff each fall since 2004. The survey was developed from the research-based Organizational Climate Inventory (OCI) (Hoy et al., 2002). The OCI is used nationally for campus improvement, and measures four sub-dimensions of climate. These subscales plus three additional scales were used to compute an **Overall Climate Score** for each campus.

The 4 sub-dimensions of climate measured by the OCI are:

- **External Influences**¹— the extent to which the school is influenced by outside groups such as parents or citizen organizations.
- **Collegial Leadership**—the extent to which the principal treats teachers and staff with openness, egalitarianism, and friendliness and sets clear expectations and standards for performance.
- **Professional Teacher Behavior**—the extent to which teachers are respectful of their colleagues' competence, committed to students, and cooperative with each other.
- **Achievement Press**—the degree to which students, parents, teachers, and principals exert pressure for high standards and school improvement.

In addition, the AISD Survey includes measures of:

- **General Climate**—additional general climate items relevant to all campus staff.
- **Positive Behavior Support**—addresses the prevalence of positive student behaviors and staff reinforcement of those behaviors.
- **School Safety**—addresses the prevalence and frequency of undesirable student behaviors on campus.

SYNOPSIS OF 2007-2008 STAFF CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS

The Campus Staff Climate survey was administered to campus employees in Fall 2007, and 7,145 completed surveys were returned.

¹ Originally named "Institutional Vulnerability," this subscale was renamed to reflect more accurately the relationship that is demonstrated in AISD between this measure and academic performance.

Description of Survey Respondents

The total number of respondents by level for the past 3 years can be found in Table 1. Key findings for response trends are presented below.

Table 1. Survey Respondents

	2005-2006			2006-2007			2007-2008		
	EL	MS	HS	EL	MS	HS	EL	MS	HS
Teacher	2,464	731	854	2,676	840	988	2,786	836	970
Administrator/Other Prof	318	95	135	333	92	147	373	103	143
Classified/Support Staff	531	145	204	737	235	297	773	299	332
Unspecified	258	161	128	254	81	113	288	101	141
Total	3,571	1,132	1,321	4,000	1,248	1,545	4,220	1,339	1,586

- The number of survey respondents generally has increased over time.
- While exact response rates are not possible to create for each staff role group, approximately 79% of teachers and 61% of administrators/other professional employees responded to the survey in 2007-2008.
- The response of Classified/Support staff to the survey has increased more than that of any other staff role group since 2005-2006.

Key Findings for Climate Subscale Results

Scores for Overall Climate and each climate subscale are reported in Table 2. Scores greater than 3.0 are considered to be “positive,” scores between 2.5 and 3.0 are “fair,” and scores below 2.5 are “not positive.”

Table 2. Subscale Scores for OCI and Additional Subscales, 2007-2008

	Overall Climate	External Influences	Collegial Leadership	Professional Teacher Behavior	Achievement Press	General Climate	Positive Behavior Support	Safety
All EL	3.08	2.70	3.05	3.25	2.87	3.17	3.19	3.17
All MS	2.87	2.65	3.07	3.13	2.63	3.00	3.02	2.63
All HS	2.79	2.60	2.71	3.07	2.59	2.92	2.92	2.72

- Despite some fluctuations in item level responses and some slight increases and decreases in average subscale scores, climate subscale scores did not change meaningfully² from the prior year for any subscale.
- *Professional Teacher Behavior* scores are in the positive range (above the desirable 3.0 level) for all campus levels, suggesting that campus staff view teachers as supportive, respectful, cooperative, and dedicated to their students. Additional information about each item in the scale can be found in Table 7.
- *Safety* scores are above 3.0 for elementary schools, suggesting that elementary campus staff believe that undesirable student behaviors such as bullying, acts of disrespect, and gang activity are neither frequent nor widespread on their campuses.

² Effect sizes (Cohen’s d) were calculated using the means from year to year. Effect sizes are a measure of the magnitude of the difference between two means. Mean differences were flagged as meaningful where $d \geq .18$.

- Reports of bullying have decreased significantly for each of the past two years at both the middle and high school levels, as have reports of student disrespect and racial tension at the high school level. At the high school level, campus staff reported a decrease from 2006-2007 in the frequency of each undesirable behavior. Additional information about *Safety*, including averages for each scale item for the past 3 years can be found in Table 10.
- *Collegial Leadership* scores fluctuated a bit in 2007. Four individual high schools scored significantly lower in 2007, and two scored significantly higher. It is notable that both of those with higher scores also had new principals in 2007. Of middle schools, one had a significantly lower *Collegial Leadership* score in 2007-2008 (and a new principal). Four middle schools scored significantly higher, and three of those had a new principal. Of elementary schools, 19 (24%) scored significantly higher for *Collegial Leadership* this year than the prior, and of those, 5 had new principals; 24 (30%) elementary schools scored significantly lower, 4 of which also had new principals.
- Consistent with previous data from AISD and with other climate research (see Schmitt, 2006), school climate continues to be rated more positively overall among elementary campuses than for secondary campuses. However, *Collegial Leadership* is rated equally high by elementary and middle school staff in AISD.
- Scores for *Safety* and *Collegial Leadership* varied the most by campus level, while *External Influences* and *Professional Teacher Behavior* varied the least from level to level.

School Climate and Achievement

School climate variables have been linked to student achievement at AISD. Schmitt (2006) found that High Need³ and Lower Need Elementary campuses differed with respect to the relationships among income, school climate, and achievement. Consistent with the findings presented in that study, the 2007-2008 climate subscales are related to campus TAKS performance (see Tables 3 and 4).

- Of all climate subscales, *Achievement Press* is most strongly related to TAKS reading and math scores for schools at all campus levels, regardless of school level of need.
- In secondary schools, *Achievement Press* and *Safety* are most strongly related to TAKS, followed by *Overall Climate* and *General Climate*.
- Climate is related more strongly to math TAKS passing rates for secondary schools and to reading TAKS passing rates for elementary schools.
- The climate subscales related to TAKS passing rates are similar for High Need and Lower Need elementary schools, though relationships between climate and TAKS are somewhat stronger for Lower Need than for High Need elementary schools.
- *Safety* is moderately related to TAKS at elementary schools, though not as strongly related as the top three climate subscales: *Achievement Press*, *Professional Teacher Behavior*, and *General Climate*.
- Despite being somewhat weaker for High Need than Lower Need elementary schools, relationships among the top three subscales mentioned above and TAKS are still moderately strong for High Need elementary schools.

³ High Need Elementary schools are defined as those with >80% economically disadvantaged students.

Table 3. Correlations⁴ for Climate Subscales and Percent Passing TAKS Reading in 2007

	External Influences	Collegial Leadership	Professional Teacher Behavior	Achievement Press	General Climate	Positive Behavior Support	Safety	Overall
Lower Need EL	-.03	.48**	.66**	.81**	.65**	.46**	.51**	.48**
High Need EL	.04	.38**	.50**	.60**	.53**	.07	.39**	.33**
All Secondary	-.48*	.09	.39*	.81**	.42*	.28	.67**	.51**

*Significant at the $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

**Significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Correlations for Climate Subscales and Campus Percent Passing TAKS Math in 2007

	External Influences	Collegial Leadership	Professional Teacher Behavior	Achievement Press	General Climate	Positive Behavior Support	Safety	Overall
Lower Need EL	-.06	.45*	.61**	.74**	.56**	.41*	.53**	.47**
High Need EL	-.01	.38*	.37*	.47**	.43**	.16	.29	.32*
All Secondary	-.48*	.17	.42*	.84**	.48*	.33	.69**	.56**

*Significant at the $p < .05$ level (2-tailed).

**Significant at the $p < .01$ level (2-tailed).

CLIMATE SUBSCALE RESULTS

In the tables that follow, results for each survey subscale are presented by campus level, along with averages of scaled responses to each item. Some changes were made to improve the campus staff climate survey instrument for 2006-2007; therefore, comparison scores from 2005-2006 are not available for some items, as indicated by the asterisks (**).

Organizational Climate Inventory (OCI) Results

Staff rated each item on a scale from **1** (*Rarely Occurs*) to **4** (*Very Frequently Occurs*)⁵. Results for each survey subscale and item are presented in the tables that follow. Arrows indicate that a change from the previous year was statistically meaningful.⁶ Scores also have been coded such that those in **bold** are above 3.0 and considered “positive.”

⁴ Correlations range from 0 (no relationship) to 1 (perfect relationship); + or - signs indicate the direction of relationship. The “-” symbol indicates an inverse relationship; “+” indicates both factors increase/decrease together.

⁵ Respondents also had the option of marking “N/A.”

⁶ Effect sizes (Cohen’s d) were calculated using the means from year to year, representing a measure of the magnitude of the difference. Mean differences were flagged as meaningful where $d \geq .18$. In general, effect sizes are considered small at $d = .20$, medium at $d = .50$, and large at $d = .80$ (Coe, 2000; Valentine & Cooper, 2003). However, research indicates that these benchmarks may not adequately address the magnitude of effects in all areas because some areas, like education, are likely to have smaller effect sizes than others (Valentine & Cooper, 2003).

Table 5. External Influences

External Influences Items	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
*4. The principal responds to pressure from parents.	**	2.21	2.23	**	2.27	2.32	**	2.42	2.47
*8. The school is vulnerable to outside pressures.	2.73	2.71	2.71	2.45	2.56	2.54	2.34	2.48	2.47
*19. Teachers feel pressure from the community.	2.85	2.85	2.88	2.75	2.90	2.86	2.79	2.95	2.86
*25. Select citizen groups are influential with the board.	2.76	2.83	2.79	2.66	2.77	2.70	2.53	2.61	2.59
*30. A few vocal parents can change school policy.	3.14	3.04	3.02	3.04	3.09	2.99	2.95	2.97	2.90
External Influences Subscale	n/a	2.72	2.70	n/a	2.72	2.65	n/a	2.71	2.60

*These items were reverse-scored such that a response of “Rarely Occurs” was scored as a 4.

Note: Although 4/5 items on the External Influences scale appeared on previous AISD climate surveys, the External Influences subscale was new in 2006-2007. Contrary to expectations based on past OCI research, strong community influences are associated with *greater* achievement in AISD, especially at the Secondary level. This subscale will be included in subsequent climate studies so that its influence can be better understood. These data should be interpreted with caution.

Table 6. Collegial Leadership

Collegial Leadership Items	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
1. The principal explores all sides of topics and admits that other opinions exist.	3.08	3.07	3.00	2.91	2.93	3.04	2.84	2.80	2.65
9. The principal puts suggestions made by faculty into operation.	**	2.73	2.70	**	2.64	2.74	**	2.40	2.34
10. The principal treats all faculty members as his or her equal.	2.99	2.98	2.93	2.77	2.74	2.92↑	2.67	2.68	2.59
15. The principal lets faculty know what is expected of them.	3.38	3.27	3.25	3.29	3.29	3.27	3.25	3.07	2.92
17. The principal is willing to make changes.	**	2.98	2.93	2.85	2.91	2.97	2.85	2.80	2.71
21. The principal maintains definite standards for performance.	**	3.25	3.22	**	3.18	3.20	**	2.93	2.90
34. The principal is friendly and approachable.	3.25	3.24	3.21	3.03	3.06	3.20	2.97	2.98	2.92
Collegial Leadership Subscale	n/a	3.07	3.05	n/a	2.96	3.07	n/a	2.80	2.71

Table 7. Professional Teacher Behavior

Professional Teacher Behavior Items	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
3. Teachers help and support each other.	**	3.26	3.28	**	3.28	3.23	**	3.04	3.14
11. Teachers respect the professional competence of their colleagues.	**	3.14	3.15	**	3.10	3.05	**	2.94	2.97
13. The interactions between faculty members are cooperative.	**	3.12	3.15	**	3.08	3.06	**	2.96	3.01
16. Teachers in this school exercise professional judgment.	**	3.25	3.25	**	3.20	3.14	**	3.06	3.06
20. Teachers “go the extra mile” with their students.	**	3.38	3.39	**	3.27	3.24	**	3.15	3.22
22. Teachers provide strong social support for colleagues.	**	3.06	3.09	**	3.03	3.00	**	2.75	2.87
32. Teachers accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.	3.05	3.06	3.06	2.81	2.90	2.87	2.81	2.78	2.79
35. Teachers show commitment to their students.	3.53	3.48	3.47	3.34	3.33	3.29	3.30	3.18	3.26
Professional Teacher Behavior Subscale	n/a	3.21	3.25	n/a	3.14	3.13	n/a	2.97	3.07

Table 8. Achievement Press

Achievement Press Items	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
2. The school sets high standards for academic performance.	**	3.49	3.47	**	3.25	3.30	**	2.96	3.06
5. Teachers in this school believe that their students have the ability to achieve academically.	**	3.40	3.40	3.26	3.20	3.16	3.15	3.00	3.06
6. Parents exert pressure to maintain high standards.	**	2.36	2.38	**	2.27	2.21	**	2.12	2.22
7. Academic achievement is recognized and acknowledged by the school.	**	3.30	3.26	**	3.20	3.20	**	3.03	3.03
12. Parents press for school improvement.	**	2.29	2.24	**	2.15	2.21	**	2.17	2.20
14. Students in this school can achieve the goals that have been set for them.	**	3.12	3.11	**	2.89	2.89	**	2.75	2.81
18. Students respect others who get good grades.	3.07	2.96	2.96	2.48	2.38	2.38	2.50	2.38	2.47
24. Students seek extra work so they can get good grades.	2.08	2.11	2.13	2.06	2.02	2.04	2.08	2.01	2.13
31. Students try hard to improve on previous work.	2.65	2.66	2.67	2.21	2.24	2.24	2.18	2.14	2.22
33. The learning environment is orderly and serious.	3.14	3.08	3.08	2.81	2.81	2.81	2.63	2.53	2.63
Achievement Press Subscale	n/a	2.90	2.87	n/a	2.66	2.63	n/a	2.52	2.59

↑↓ indicate meaningful increases and decreases from the previous year. Scores have been coded such that those in **bold** are considered “positive.”

Supplemental Climate Subscale Results

In addition to the OCI subscales, the AISD Staff Climate Survey includes supplemental items concerning general climate, student behaviors, and positive behavior support. Results for each survey subscale and item are presented in the tables that follow. Arrows indicate that a change from the previous year was statistically meaningful.⁷

Table 9. General Climate

Additional General Climate Items	All EL		All MS		All HS	
	06-07	07-08	06-07	07-08	06-07	07-08
23. Campus staff are friendly to each other.	3.28	3.29	3.26	3.18	3.11	3.13
26. Campus staff exhibit pride in their affiliation with the school.	3.15	3.14	3.03	2.98	2.90	2.97
27. Campus staff are willing to go out of their way to help.	3.19	3.20	3.13	3.08	3.00	3.04
28. Campus staff accomplish their jobs with enthusiasm.	3.03	3.06	2.92	2.90	2.78	2.80
29. Campus staff are committed to their jobs.	3.32	3.31	3.19	3.13	3.04	3.06
36. The goals of my school are made clear.	3.28	3.27	3.22	3.18	2.97	2.88
37. AISD works toward common goals.	2.87	2.84	2.63	2.58	2.48	2.42
General Climate Subscale	3.16	3.17	3.05	3.00	2.90	2.92

Table 10. Frequency of Selected Undesirable Student Behaviors

To the best of your knowledge, <i>how often</i> do the following events occur at your school?	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
38. ^a Student racial tension	0.95	0.89	0.88	1.90	1.66 ↓	1.63	2.10	1.74 ↓	1.50 ↓
39. ^a Student bullying	1.77	1.71	1.66	2.70	2.52↓	2.35↓	2.38	2.15↓	1.78 ↓
40. ^a Widespread disorder in classrooms	0.94	0.93	0.95	1.74	1.65	1.60	1.79	1.79	1.51 ↓
41. ^a Student acts of disrespect for Teachers	1.60	1.58	1.54	2.64	2.52	2.42	2.76	2.58	2.32↓
42. ^a Student acts of disrespect for Non-teaching Professional or Administrative Staff	1.47	1.45	1.41	2.49	2.37	2.27	2.61	2.40↓	2.15↓
43. ^a Student acts of disrespect for Classified or Support Staff	1.40	1.39	1.37	2.39	2.28	2.16	2.53	2.30↓	2.03↓
44. ^a Gang activities	0.40	0.39	0.41	1.76	1.60	1.63	1.97	1.83	1.65

⁷ Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated using the means from year to year. Effect sizes are a measure of the magnitude of the difference between two means. Mean differences were flagged as meaningful where $d \geq .18$. ↑↓ indicate meaningful increases and decreases from the previous year. Scores have been coded such that those in **bold** are considered "positive."

Table 11. Prevalence of Selected Undesirable Student Behaviors

To the best of your knowledge, <i>how many students at your school display behaviors that contribute to the following events?</i>	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
47. ^b Student racial tension	0.90	0.90	0.88	1.66	1.59	1.56	1.73	1.70	1.52
48. ^b Student bullying	1.40	1.42	1.37	1.93	1.94	1.87	1.72	1.74	1.55
49. ^b Widespread disorder in classrooms	1.00	1.06	1.05	1.60	1.62	1.58	1.67	1.73	1.57
50. ^b Student acts of disrespect for Teachers	1.30	1.36	1.33	1.89	1.94	1.87	2.00	2.01	1.86
51. ^b Student acts of disrespect for Non-teaching Professional or Administrative Staff	1.30	1.29	1.24	1.77	1.84	1.77	1.87	1.89	1.75
52. ^b Student acts of disrespect for Classified or Support Staff	1.20	1.24	1.22	1.75	1.79	1.73	1.83	1.84	1.70
53. ^b Gang activities	0.40	0.44	0.46	1.47	1.38	1.43	1.55	1.60	1.48
Safety Subscale*	n/a	3.15	3.17	n/a	2.58	2.63	n/a	2.55	2.72

Notes: ^a Rated on a scale of 0 (Never Happens) to 4 (Happens Daily). ^b Rated on a scale of 0 (None) to 5 (All).

It is desirable to have an average response of **less than 2.0** for each item, indicated in bold type.

*It is desirable to have an average Safety Subscale response of **at least 3.0**, indicated in bold type.

Safety Subscale scores are based on responses to safety items and converted to range from 0 (low) to 4 (highest).

Table 12. Positive Student Behaviors and Staff Reinforcement of Positive Student Behaviors

To the best of your knowledge, <i>how often do the following events occur at your school?</i>	All EL			All MS			All HS		
	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08	05-06	06-07	07-08
45. ^a Commendable student behavior	3.40	3.27	3.25	3.41	3.24↓	3.17	3.38	3.10↓	3.09
46. ^a Staff reinforcement of commendable student behavior	3.40	3.25↓	3.27	3.36	3.18↓	3.10	3.21	2.89↓	2.87
To the best of your knowledge, how many students or staff exhibit the following behaviors?									
54. ^b Commendable student behavior	3.20	3.16	3.32↑	2.98	2.94	2.94	2.91	2.76	2.89
55. ^b Staff reinforcement of commendable student behaviors	3.90	3.78	3.90	3.43	3.42	3.40	3.29	3.11	3.21
Positive Behavior Support Subscale*	n/a	3.19	3.19	n/a	3.07	3.02	n/a	2.90	2.92

Note: ^a Rated on a scale of 0 (Never Happens) to 4 (Happens Daily). ^b Rated on a scale of 0 (None) to 5 (All).

It is desirable to have an average response of **greater than 3.0** for each item, indicated in bold type.

*It is desirable to have an average Positive Behavior Support Subscale score of **at least 3.0**, indicated in bold type.

Positive Behavior Support Subscale scores are based on responses to these items and converted to range from 0 (low) to 4 (highest).

↑↓ indicate meaningful increases and decreases from the previous year. Scores have been coded such that those in **bold** are considered “positive.”

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