RESULTS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY: BECKER PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Research, Development, and Engagement to Improve Education

How to Cite this Report

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Introduction

The Becker Public School District (Independent School District No. 726) is located in Becker, MN. The district contracted with the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) to evaluate school climate across the district. To that end, CAREI identified and administered a school climate survey instrument to teachers in each of the district's four schools including Primary School (grades K-2), Intermediate School (grades 3-5), Middle School (grades 6-8), and High School (grades 9-12). This report presents the key findings of the survey results.

Overview

The mission of the Becker Public School District is to prepare self-directed learners to thrive in a changing global community. The district's vision is that[1]:

- Community members should understand the changing landscape of education to engage with, participate in, and support the educational system.
- Staff members should be adaptable to learn new information and skills, which facilitate learning, so students are prepared to thrive in an ever-changing world.
- Students should become self-directed learners, self-disciplined, and autonomous workers while being creative thinkers with a drive for innovation.
- Parents should collaborate and understand the new realities of today's learning environment to model and teach self-directed behavior and life-long learning in an environment that fosters these expectations.

The district is committed to seeking ways to improve its curriculum and educational delivery system, which also includes a focus on school climate and culture. Thus, CAREI was asked to collect information regarding teachers' perceptions and experiences with school climate.

Focus of the School Climate Survey

The activities planned for conducting the survey spanned a four-month period of time between August 1, 2017 and November 30, 2017. The plan included identifying a school climate survey, administering the school climate survey, and summarizing the results.

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[1] Extracted from http://www.becker.k12.mn.us/home/district-vision?tmpl=%2Fsystem%2Fapp%2Ftemplates%2Fprint%2F&showPrintDialog=1

The overarching questions that guided the study are:

- What are teachers' perceptions of school climate in the Becker Public School District?
- What are teachers' perceptions of school climate in the Primary School?
- What are teachers' perceptions of school climate in the Intermediate?
- What are teachers' perceptions of school climate in the Middle School?
- What are teachers' perceptions of school climate in the High School?

Methods

To assess school climate in Becker schools, CAREI evaluators conducted a review of existing school climate survey instruments and focused on two main criteria: (1) The district's desire to focus on teacher perceptions, and (2) the psychometric qualities of the instruments. As result of that review, the evaluators selected the 2014 New Jersey School Climate Survey (NJSCS)[2].

The NJSCS Survey Instrument
The NJSCS is a public resource provided to help schools and districts understand and improve local safe and supportive conditions needed for learning. NJSCS is a collaborative effort between the Bloustein Center for Survey Research (BCSR) located at Rutgers University and the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The NJSCS was chosen because it is a comprehensive and empirically valid instrument that only takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The domains measured in the NJSCS School Climate Survey are defined as follows:[3]
1. **Physical Environment**: This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.
2. **Teaching and Learning Capability**: This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school, the support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" by students and teachers. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.
3. **Morale in the School Community**: This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.
4. **Quality of Relationships**: This domain assesses the degree to which lines of

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[2] http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/njscs/

[3] NJSCS Survey Administration Guide 2.0, p. 28-29.

interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.

5. **Level of Parental Support and Engagement**: This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning

6. **Safety Situation**: This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.

7. **Emotional Environment**: This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school; and

8. **Perception of Administration Support**: This domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes regarding the quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.

A copy of the survey instrument is attached to this report as Appendix A.

An administration of the full NJSCS survey includes four validated questionnaires, (one each for school staff, elementary students, middle-high school students, and for parents). While NJSCS suggests that the most robust and useful data is likely to come from the administration of all four surveys (or as many as possible), there is flexibility to administer the surveys in ways that best serve the information needs of districts and schools. To respond to the overarching questions posed in this study, only the school staff questionnaire was administered to teachers in the district.

Teachers in Becker's four buildings were invited to complete an online survey between October 23 and November 3, 2017. A total of 155 teachers completed a survey out of the 191 who received an invitation. This represents an 81% response rate. The survey consisted of 57 items. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a variety of statements about their school using a Likert type rating scale from 1 to 5; with 1 = *Strongly Disagree,* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

School Climate Definition

The definition of school climate used by CAREI evaluators aligns with the description of the National School Climate Center which defines school climate as, "the quality and character of school life as it

relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures." [4] One of the reasons why school climate is so important is because it sets the tone for all teaching and learning in schools and it is predictive of students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways.

Data Analysis Procedures

The survey results are reported at the domain score levels described above. Within each school building, the analysis encompassed a review and interpretation of each domain score level. The domain score scale represents values ranging from 0 to 100, which has been tabulated from survey results. A higher score represents a healthier, more positive climate in that domain. There is no set benchmark for measuring school climate; it is not an absolute measure. School climate is a relative variable that can only be compared to a prior measure of itself. The analysis involved identifying areas with high and low percentages of agreement.

Results

Overall District Domain

The overall domain scores for the four combined school sites across the district, as well as each individual site are reported in Table 1 below. Each domain consisted of 4 to 10 survey items. Results of the complete survey by domain are reported in Appendix B, attached to this report.

Table 1. Domain scores for district and individual school sites

Domain	District	Primary School	Intermediate School	Middle School	High School
Safety	88.4	86.9	90.1	95.0	83.2
Parental Support and Engagement	70.8	75.8	66.8	75.5	67.0
Physical Environment	70.4	70.4	79.3	76.7	59.2
Relationships	70.1	74.4	71.7	76.3	61.6
Emotional Environment	66.8	69.0	63.7	74.3	62.3
Administration Support	66.6	68.7	56.5	78.1	64.0
Teaching and Learning	66.6	66.3	65.2	75.0	61.6
Morale in the School Setting	66.5	63.9	63.3	76.8	62.7

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[4] Extracted from http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/faq.php

DOMAIN	DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN SCORE	DOMAIN SCORE DISTRIBUTION (in deciles)
Physical Environment	This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.	70.4	
Teaching and Learning	This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" (i.e., a sense of personal responsibility for teaching and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives) by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.	66.6	
Community — Morale in the School	This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.	66.5	
Relationships	This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.	70.1	
Engagement — Parental Support and	This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning.	70.8	
Safety	This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.	88.4	
Emotional Environment	This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school.	66.8	
Administration Support	By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.	66.6	

DOMAIN	DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN SCORE	DOMAIN SCORE DISTRIBUTION (in deciles)
Physical Environment	This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.	70.4	
Teaching and Learning	This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" (i.e., a sense of personal responsibility for teaching and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives) by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.	66.3	
Community — Morale in the School	This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.	63.9	
Relationships	This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.	74.4	
Engagement — Parental Support and	This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning.	75.8	
Safety	This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.	86.9	
Emotional Environment	This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school.	69.0	
Administration Support	By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.	68.7	

DOMAIN	DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN SCORE	DOMAIN SCORE DISTRIBUTION (in deciles)

Physical Environment

This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.

79.3

Teaching and Learning

This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" (i.e., a sense of personal responsibility for teaching and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives) by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.

65.2

Community — Morale in the School

This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.

63.3

Relationships

This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.

71.7

Engagement — Parental Support and

This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning.

66.8

Safety

This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.

90.1

Emotional Environment

This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school.

63.7

Administration Support

By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.

56.5

DOMAIN	DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN SCORE	DOMAIN SCORE DISTRIBUTION (in deciles)
Physical Environment	This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.	76.7	
Teaching and Learning	This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" (i.e., a sense of personal responsibility for teaching and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives) by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.	75.0	
Community / Morale in the School	This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.	76.8	
Relationships	This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.	76.3	
Engagement / Parental Support and	This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning.	75.5	
Safety	This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.	95.0	
Emotional Environment	This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school.	74.3	
Administration Support	By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.	78.1	

DOMAIN	DOMAIN DESCRIPTION	DOMAIN SCORE	DOMAIN SCORE DISTRIBUTION (in deciles)
Physical Environment	This domain addresses scheduling, the use of the building, and attitudes toward the building.	59.2	
Teaching and Learning	This domain focuses on the academic climate of the school and probes support for student development, levels of instructional challenge and relevance, and attitudes about "ownership" (i.e., a sense of personal responsibility for teaching and learning and personal pride in successfully achieving academic objectives) by students of learning and teachers of teaching. It also includes general attitudinal measures of satisfaction with the school's overall instructional quality.	61.6	
Community — Morale in the School	This domain addresses "pride of place" as ownership and identification with the school's central character, as well as a call to all stakeholders for "belonging" to the school.	62.7	
Relationships	This domain assesses the degree to which lines of interpersonal communication are open and honest and produce healthy, positive outcomes. This includes an assessment of the depth, sincerity, and authenticity of communications efforts.	61.6	
Engagement — Parental Support and	This domain is concerned with the degree to which parents and community members are incorporated into both the social and academic life of the school. This includes assessing the efficacy of school-home communications and an assessment of the degree of home support for learning.	67.0	
Safety	This domain addresses attitudes toward the individual's sense of physical safety in and around the school.	83.2	
Emotional Environment	This domain addresses attitudes toward the social environment. This includes perceptions of how the average student ought to, and does, behave, as well as the general fairness of the school.	62.3	
Administration Support	By considering the school as a "common cause," this domain assesses the school leadership's perceived ability to support and rally the school community to healthy and positive outcomes in terms of quality of communications, level of integrity, and ease of teamwork, as well as the promotion of professional and academic success.	64.0	

Safety: The area with the highest average score at each site was safety with a score of 88.4 for the district overall and a range from 83.2 to 95.0 at school sites. Questions relating to both staff and student safety were included in this area.

Parental Support and Engagement: This domain had a score of 70.8 at the district level and included questions about how informed and engaged parents are with their child's performance at school, as well as with school activities overall. The parent support and engagement domain score was higher at the Primary School and Middle School than it was at the Intermediate School or High School.

Physical Environment: The domain scores for physical environment ranged from 59.2 to 70.4 across school sites, with a district average of 70.4. Within this domain, questions relating to the building and environment scored higher than items about school schedules and adequate planning time for teachers.

Relationships: The relationships domain included questions about teacher, parent and student relations relating to respect and working together. Scores ranged from 61.6 at the High School to 76.3 at the Middle School. The average score across the district was 70.1.

Emotional Environment: The emotional environment domain included questions about student behavior, interactions and well-being. The domain score for the district overall was 66.8 and domain scores ranged from 62.3 to 74.3 across school sites.

Administration Support: The majority of the questions included in this domain focused on school administration's relationship and interactions with teachers and staff. Across the district, the domain score was 66.6.

Teaching and Learning: The domain score for teaching and learning was the same as the score for administration support (66.6). This area included questions about staff professionalism as well as student learning and performance. Scores ranged from 61.6 to 71.0 at individual school sites.

Morale in the School Setting: Morale in the school setting was the area with the lowest domain score overall (66.5).

Summary of the Results

❖ Domain scores across all four sites in the district were primarily between the mid-60s to mid-70s.

❖ Results around safety were consistently positive across all four sites and represented the highest domain score.

❖ The domain with the lowest score across the district was *Morale in the School Setting* (66.5). The domains of *Administration Support* and *Teaching and Learning* had very similar overall scores (66.6).

References

State of New Jersey Department of Education (2014) *Keeping our Kids Safe, Healthy & in School*: *New Jersey School Climate Survey*. Retrieved from http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/njscs/

Appendix A

NJ School Climate Survey: School Staff

School Climate Survey
School Staff

We want to know what YOU think about your school.

The information from the survey will help us improve student relationships, learning conditions, and the school's overall environment.

YOUR answers are confidential.

Your answers will be combined with those of other school staff.
No one will be told how you answered.

This survey is voluntary.

You do NOT have to answer any question if you do not want to, but we hope you will answer as many questions as you can.

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read each question carefully, and circle the number under the <u>one</u> answer that most closely fits your opinion. We appreciate your taking the time to do the survey.

BEGIN YOUR SURVEY BELOW ↓

1. **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about YOUR SCHOOL:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. The school's schedule allows adequate time for teacher collaboration.	1	2	3	4	5
b. The school's schedule allows adequate time for teacher preparation and planning.	1	2	3	4	5
c. Students at this school learn ways to manage time.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The school environment is clean and in good condition.	1	2	3	4	5
e. I take pride in the appearance of the school.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I feel safe outside on the school grounds.	1	2	3	4	5
g. I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
h. I feel safe in the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Students are safe at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
j. In this school, we teach ways to resolve disagreements so that everyone can be satisfied with the outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
k. Students at this school are well-behaved.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE ⟶

2. **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about YOUR SCHOOL:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Students at this school don't care about learning.	1	2	3	4	5
b. I spend a great deal of time dealing with students' social and emotional challenges.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The school community has high expectations of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Students have pride in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
e. My class enrollments are too large.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Students at this school get the chance to work independently.	1	2	3	4	5
g. School administrators give me useful feedback on my teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Some students at this school just cannot be motivated to do the work.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Students at this school are encouraged to think critically.	1	2	3	4	5
j. I have access to the tools I need to do my job.	1	2	3	4	5
k. I am dissatisfied with opportunities for my professional growth.	1	2	3	4	5
l. I look forward to coming to work every day.	1	2	3	4	5
m. I spend too much of my teaching time on disciplining students.	1	2	3	4	5
n. The best teachers and staff are retained at this school.	1	2	3	4	5

PLEASE GO TO THE NEXT PAGE $\longrightarrow$

3. **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about YOUR SCHOOL:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Teachers have close working relationships with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Teachers talk with students about ways to understand and control emotions.	1	2	3	4	5
c. At this school, teachers are treated and respected as educational professionals.	1	2	3	4	5
d. At this school, it is common for students to tease and insult one another.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Parents respect their children's teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
f. I do not have enough autonomy over my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
g. Adults who work in this school treat students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Adults who work in this school typically work well with one another.	1	2	3	4	5
i. Many students at this school go out of their way to treat other students badly.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Teachers at this school build strong relationships with students.	1	2	3	4	5
k. The code of student conduct is fair.	1	2	3	4	5
l. The school consistently enforces the code of student conduct.	1	2	3	4	5
m. Parents are actively involved with the school.	1	2	3	4	5
n. Students respect their teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
o. Parents are made to feel welcome in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
p. Parents know what is going on in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
q. Parents are aware of what is expected of their child at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
r. Parents care about how their child performs in school.	1	2	3	4	5

4. **Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements about YOUR SCHOOL:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Students in this school respect each other's differences (for example, gender, race, culture, etc.).	1	2	3	4	5
b. I am proud to tell others that I work at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
c. School administrators recognize teachers for a job well-done.	1	2	3	4	5
d. The school staff respects and embraces diversity.	1	2	3	4	5
e. School administrators communicate effectively with others from diverse backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5
f. This school encourages students to get involved in extracurricular activities.	1	2	3	4	5
g. School administrators follow through on commitments.	1	2	3	4	5
h. School administrators involve teachers in decision making and problem solving.	1	2	3	4	5
i. School administrators and staff communicate with each other effectively.	1	2	3	4	5
j. School administrators promote the success of all students.	1	2	3	4	5
k. School administrators hold themselves to the same high expectations as others.	1	2	3	4	5
l. School administrators back me up when I need it.	1	2	3	4	5
m. School administrators are aware of what goes on in the classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5
n. This school is a good place for me to work and learn.	1	2	3	4	5

THIS IS THE END OF THE SURVEY. THANK YOU!

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