Staff Climate Survey
Executive Summary
2006-07

Research has shown that the professional climate of an organization influences its outcomes. Climate can be defined as behaviors within a workplace or learning environment that can influence whether an individual feels personally safe, listened to, valued and treated fairly and with respect. In order to evaluate the professional climate in the Aurora Public Schools as perceived by employees, a survey was administered to Professional/Technical and Licensed Staff in May of 2007.

Methodology

A 36 item climate survey was presented to all APS Professional/Technical and Licensed Staff May of 2007. The survey questions were developed by a volunteer group of teachers, administrators and professional/technical staff in conjunction with the Aurora Education Association. At the time of the survey, 2069 staff in the above categories was employed by APS. A total of 1,251 staff completed the survey for a completion rate of 60%.

Summary of Results

Results of the survey are grouped into five areas:
- Clarity of Purpose
- Communication
- Relationships
- Work Environment
- Morale

Responses were analyzed at the district and school levels.

Clarity of Purpose. For clarity of purpose of work, staff responded most positively that they were familiar with the VISTA 2010 Plan (85% agreed) and that they understood the long-term vision of APS (84% agreed). Staff also agreed that they know how their work relates to the district's goals and priorities as stated in the VISTA 2010 Strategic Plan (76% agreed) and that they support the educational direction of APS (64% agreed). Staff agreed less with the statement "I believe APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement (56% agreed/23% disagreed).

Communication. Internal communication in APS as measured by the survey was seen as a general area of challenge as a large percent of staff disagreed with the statements, "I am encouraged to provide suggestions on ways to improve programs or services" (47% disagreed) and "I am comfortable in stating my opinions about APS programs even if I disagree with an approach being taken" (55% disagreed). Staff agreed more with the statement, "Administrators and supervisors share the information I need to perform my job" (51% agreed) although a significant percent also disagreed with the statement (32% disagreed).

Trust and Respect. Trust and respect was the survey area with the most noted challenges. Regarding an overall atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, 49% disagreed and 34% agreed that there is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within their school. Staff primarily disagreed that they are able to influence decisions that are made by the district (63% disagreed) and at their site (47% disagreed/36% agreed).

Staff also disagreed that they trust other staff who make decisions that affect them at district level (63% disagreed) and gave mixed responses on trusting staff who make decisions that affect them at the school level (42% disagreed/38% agreed). A majority of staff agreed with the statement that they were trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction (49% agreed) although roughly another one-third of staff disagreed with the statement.

Work Environment. The majority of staff responded that they work in a school environment that is clean and well maintained (73% agreed) and that there are adequate security measures in place at their site (63% agreed). Other relative strengths in the area of overall work environment were noted for having sufficient access to appropriate instructional materials/resources (59% agreed), having sufficient access to instructional technology (58% agreed), and receiving district professional development that provided strategies that staff could incorporate into instruction (52% agreed).

Challenges in the area of work environment were noted for schools having an effective process for making group decisions and solving problems (47% disagreed/37% agreed). Staff also perceived that they are not empowered to help solve problems (45% disagreed/35% agreed), and that there is not consistent enforcement of rules for student conduct (51% disagreed/35% agreed).

Several other statements regarding work environment were given mixed responses including: I believe decisions made in APS/my site are based on adequate student data and information; decisions made at my site are based on the best interests of students; I have opportunities to participate in school planning and decision making; and performance evaluations are fair at my school.

Morale. Fairly equal percents of staff agreed and disagreed with the statements intended to reflect moral in APS. These statements included: I would encourage someone to work for APS; I feel appreciated for the work I do; there is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my site; and there is a professional atmosphere for staff working at my site.

Conclusions

The perceptions held by all stakeholders can influence school outcomes. It is generally accepted that the opinions and perceptions held by staff have the greatest impact on professional climate. The results presented in this report should be viewed with caution as perceptions (of causes) as perceptions typically are developed over time and can require a significant period of time to change.

Several positive aspects of professional climate in APS were reported. These aspects included understanding and supporting of the APS vision, working in a clean and safe environment, and having adequate materials/technology support to perform the required work.

While positive aspects of professional climate were reported, there are specific areas of professional climate that need to be monitored and followed-up on. These include but are not limited to: Trust that staff can state opinions either for or against current policies/programs; trust in the people who are making both district and school level decisions; empowering staff to be a part of an effective process for making group decisions and problem solving; and consistency in the enforcement of rules for student conduct.