



Division of Accountability & Research

Administrative & Professional Technical Staff Climate Survey

Executive Summary

2007-08

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 help evaluate the professional climate in the Aurora Public Schools as perceived by employees, a survey was administered to the Administrative and Professional Technical Staff in January of 2008.

Methodology

A 31 item climate survey was presented to all APS administrative and professional technical staff in January 2008. The survey questions were adapted from questions originally developed in the spring of 2007 by a volunteer group of teachers, administrators and professional/technical staff in conjunction with the Aurora Education Association. While both administrative and professional technical staff was surveyed in spring of 2007, this is the first time that the results have been combined and presented into a report. At the time of the survey, 220 administrative and professional technical staff was employed by APS. A total of 213 staff completed the survey for a completion rate of 97%.

Summary of Results

Results of the survey are grouped into six areas:

- Clarity of Purpose
- Communication
- Trust and Respect
- Work Environment
- Morale
- Support for Programs

Clarity of Purpose. For clarity of purpose of work, agreement percents are consistently highest for all areas of the survey. Staff responded positively that they were familiar with the VISTA 2010 Plan (91% agreed) and that they understood the long-term vision of APS (92% 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 (88% agreed), that they support the educational direction of APS (78% agreed) and believe APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement (80% agreed).

Communication. In the area of communication, the majority of staff agreed with the statement, "Administrators and supervisors share the information I need to perform my job" (72% agreed) and "Performance evaluations are fair" (84% agreed). Staff disagreed more often with the statements "I am encouraged to provide suggestions on ways to improve programs or services" (28% disagreed/68% agreed) and "I am comfortable in stating my opinions about APS programs even if I disagree with an approach being taken" (27% disagreed/60% agreed).

Trust and Respect. Regarding an overall atmosphere of trust and mutual respect, 52% of staff agreed they trust the staff who make decisions that affect them at district level (24% responded neutral). Staff provided mixed responses to questions about an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within APS (33% disagreed/47% agreed) and the perceived ability to influence decisions that are made by the district (37% disagreed/38% agreed).

Work Environment. In the area of work environment, staff agreed that there are adequate security measures in place at their site (84% agreed). The majority of staff also agreed that they are empowered to help solve problems (65% agreed/ 19% responded neutral), that decisions made in APS are based on adequate student data and information (65% agreed/15% responded neutral), and that district professional development has provided them with instructional strategies (58% agreed/24% responded neutral).

In regard to questions about support from the District Leadership Team, less than 16% of respondents disagreed that: the DLT effectively supports building administrators as they work to implement VISTA 2010; that the DLT has an adequate awareness of issues at the building level; and that the DLT effectively addresses issue brought forth from building administrators. Approximately one-third of respondents answered 'neutral' to these questions which is most likely due to being unfamiliar with what the DLT function and roles are.

Morale. The area of morale is another area of the survey which respondents agreed to questions at relatively high rates. These statements included: "I would encourage someone to work for APS" (77% agreed/12% were neutral); "I feel appreciated for the work I do" (66% agreed/13% were neutral); there is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my site (74% agreed/13% were neutral); and there is a professional atmosphere for staff working at my site (81% agreed/8% were neutral). The only question in this area with mixed responses was, "There's a positive relationship between my association and the district" (41% agreed/32% disagreed).

Support for Programs. On questions that asked about perceived support for particular programs, a large percent of respondents answered 'neutral' to these questions indicating they either had no opinion or did not believe they had enough information to answer the questions. For ELL students and programs, 39% agreed that the district has become more effective in meeting the needs of ELL students while 30% responded neutral. For Art programs, half of the respondents answered neutral (51%) and 35% agreed that the level of support for the programs has increased. For Music programs, 53% responded neutral and 34% agreed that the level of support has increased. For the Physical Education program, 44% responded neutral and 45% agreed that support for the program has increased.

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) typically are developed over time and can require a significant period of time to change.

The greatest agreement rates for administrative and professional technical staff fell in the areas of clarity of purpose, work environment and morale. While many positive aspects of professional climate were reported, there are specific areas of professional climate that need monitoring and follow-up. These areas include the overall atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within APS, the perception that staff can influence the decisions that affect them, the effectiveness in meeting the needs of ELL students and the relationship between the staff's association and the district.