



Division of Accountability & Research

Student Climate Survey Executive Summary (2010-2011)

Perceptions of school climate and safety can have a distinct impact on how well students learn. Research indicates that improved school climate can contribute to higher student achievement, higher moral among students and teachers, fewer student dropouts and reduced violence. While school reforms typically focus on student achievement due to external accountability systems, these reforms can be limited when school climate is a negative factor. In order to evaluate Aurora Public Schools students' perceptions of schools safety and climate, a survey was administered to middle and high school students in January of 2011. Note that students' perceptions are just that, perceptions, and do not reflect with certainty what is happening in APS schools.

Survey Development

The Student Climate survey was first administered during the spring of 2007. The items were developed with input from principals, students, the Division of Instruction, and the Division of Accountability and Research. The initial items were designed to reflect attitudes related to general climate, trust and respect, academics, safety and bullying, harassment, and self-concept. The items were significantly revised in 2010. In 2011, none of the survey items were revised. It should be noted, individual item scales are reverse-coded at times with disagreement indicating a favorable outcome.

Survey Participants

The Student Climate survey was administered to all secondary students in January 2011. A total of 10,482 surveys were completed. The overall percentage of student responses approximated 70.1% (MS: 84.2%; HS: 58.3%). The total percentage of students responding to the survey since its inception in 2007 can be found in table 1.

Table 1. Student Climate Survey: Historical Percent Response Rates

Grade Level	Total	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	5 Yr Ch.
Overall	10,482	76.5%	78.5%	73.9%	75.0%	70.1%	-6.4%
Middle Schools	5,718	82.4%	89.3%	86.9%	86.5%	84.2%	+1.8%
High Schools	4,764	71.1%	69.5%	64.0%	66.1%	58.3%	-12.8%

Note. Total reflects number of survey responses in 2011. Pickens Technical College surveys aren't reflected in the presented counts/percentages.

The response rate for middle school students has increased by 1.8% since survey inception with a decline of 12.8% for high schools. In 2011, the distribution of the students reported gender reflected percentages that were very similar to the district population. However, the percentage of Hispanic students responding to the survey approximated 42.6% while their membership in the district population was about 54% (i.e. as reported in the 2010 October count).

Survey Results

Overall, 21 of 40 items (52.5%) exceeded 60% agreement rate indicating high satisfaction concerning overall climate (see table 4). The most favorable rates were associated with items concerning bullying and harassment ($\geq 60\%$ agreement) which indicates that most students don't feel as if they are bullied or harassed. In addition, 75.6% report that they strongly disagree with the statement, "At school, I feel afraid". Also, 75.6% of students agreed with the statement, "My teachers expect me to graduate from high school". Less favorable responses were associated with items concerning interest in class work (Ag/SA: 39.2%), making choices regarding about what's studied at school (Ag/SA: 37.0%), consistent enforcement of school rules outside of the classroom (Ag/SA: 37.0%), and belief that belongings are safe at school (Ag/SA: 28.4%).

For middle and high school students, 60% of middle school items exceeded 60% agreement (table 5) while 37.5% of items for high school were at or exceeded 60% agreement (table 6). For most items, agreement rates were higher for middle school students with responses indicating a larger degree of satisfaction concerning overall school climate and teacher expectations/support. No item experienced a five percent or larger change in overall agreement. The largest increase in agreement was 4.9% for the item, "Classes at this school are preparing me for my future". All of the remaining items (except for item 28), also experienced changes that indicate improved school climate. The item that didn't show overall improvement, "I get to make choices about what I will study in school", reflected a decrease of 0.9% in agreement. This overall between-year item improvement should be viewed cautiously for various reasons. Foremost, our overall response rate declined by a thousand students at the high school level (i.e. approximately a 20% reduction in the number responding between-years). Prior survey administrations indicate the greatest level of dissatisfaction at this level so the removal of these students may be responsible for the observed change.

Conclusions

- The Student Climate Survey had a 70.1% overall response rate in 2011. Most survey items had moderate agreement rates. Overall, 52.5% of items exceeded 60% favorable responses. For middle schools, 60% of items exceeded 60% agreement while for high schools 37.5% of items reached this level. A total of 73.7% of high school students reported that they intended to continue on to college or beyond. Between-year change in item ratings indicate some improvement to school climate, however, these results must be interpreted cautiously.
- Areas of strength are related to perceptions of safety and low harassment/bullying while areas of concern are related to interest in academic work and general school climate. For most items, middle schools students reported more favorable outcomes than those reported by high school students.

Table 4. Item Agreement Rates: Overall Results

Item	%Dis/SD	%Ag/SA
1. I have an adult at school I trust.	18.9%	62.5%
2. At school, I feel safe.	16.5%	51.5%
3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g. hit, shoved, kicked).	61.6%	24.5%
4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.	17.6%	63.4%
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers.	19.7%	47.0%
6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*	65.1%	19.4%
7. At school, I feel afraid.	75.6%	10.7%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	44.0%	28.4%
9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.	66.1%	12.5%
10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.	18.5%	58.0%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial/ethnic backgrounds harassed*	38.9%	39.7%
12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons.	69.9%	17.4%
13. Boys and girls have the same opportunities at this school.	16.1%	61.3%
14. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.	8.1%	75.9%
15. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.	11.7%	67.8%
16. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed.	16.2%	57.4%
17. I feel safe going to and from school.	16.4%	56.8%
18. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*	80.5%	11.2%
19. If I was harassed through internet or text I would discuss it with an adult*	31.7%	43.1%
20. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.	70.4%	16.4%
21. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	24.1%	37.0%
23. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	16.8%	58.0%
24. I feel supported and respected by counselors.	12.9%	60.3%
25. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant/vice principal	17.5%	53.7%
26. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	18.8%	48.2%
27. I feel supported and respected by other students.	19.6%	46.5%
28. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	34.2%	37.0%
29. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.	14.6%	62.6%
30. I am challenged to do my best work at school.	12.3%	64.5%
31. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	28.5%	40.9%
32. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.	14.1%	57.8%
33. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.	7.2%	80.8%
34. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	52.4%	14.9%
35. I treat my teacher with respect.	8.1%	73.9%
36. I follow the rules at school	11.6%	60.0%
37. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	21.8%	39.2%
38. I learn a lot from my classes.	12.0%	61.0%
39. My teachers expect me to go to college.	10.5%	67.6%
40. I have not ditched any classes this year.	26.1%	63.2%
41. I get academic/career planning help from my counselor when I need it.*	23.3%	41.6%

Note. 2010: n=11,604. 2011: n=10,482. Item #22, How far do you think you will go in school?" is not displayed due to scale differences. Italicized/bolded Items indicate agreement rates exceed 60%. *: question abbreviated for report.

Table 5. Item Agreement Rates: Middle School Results

Item	%Dis/SD	%Ag/SA
<i>1. I have an adult at school I trust.</i>	16.6%	66.5%
2. At school, I feel safe.	16.0%	54.4%
3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g. hit, shoved, kicked).	58.4%	28.1%
<i>4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.</i>	16.9%	66.0%
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers.	18.9%	49.4%
<i>6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*</i>	61.8%	22.7%
<i>7. At school, I feel afraid.</i>	75.5%	11.0%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	39.1%	33.7%
<i>9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.</i>	68.5%	12.0%
<i>10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.</i>	18.6%	61.0%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial/ethnic backgrounds harassed*	36.8%	44.1%
<i>12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons.</i>	68.6%	19.0%
13. Boys and girls have the same opportunities at this school.	18.8%	57.6%
<i>14. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.</i>	7.4%	76.6%
<i>15. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.</i>	10.2%	71.3%
<i>16. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed.</i>	16.1%	60.8%
<i>17. I feel safe going to and from school.</i>	15.4%	61.6%
<i>18. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*</i>	80.5%	12.5%
19. If I was harassed through internet or text I would discuss it with an adult*	29.2%	48.8%
<i>20. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.</i>	65.9%	20.0%
21. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	24.2%	38.3%
23. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	18.3%	57.1%
<i>24. I feel supported and respected by counselors.</i>	12.4%	60.8%
<i>25. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant principal*</i>	15.0%	61.9%
26. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	14.1%	55.6%
27. I feel supported and respected by other students.	20.4%	48.1%
28. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	42.3%	30.8%
<i>29. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.</i>	14.4%	64.0%
<i>30. I am challenged to do my best work at school.</i>	10.8%	68.7%
31. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	28.3%	43.3%
<i>32. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.</i>	13.6%	61.1%
<i>33. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.</i>	6.1%	84.1%
34. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	53.1%	14.5%
<i>35. I treat my teacher with respect.</i>	8.3%	72.2%
<i>36. I follow the rules at school</i>	11.0%	61.5%
37. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	21.1%	42.1%
<i>38. I learn a lot from my classes.</i>	10.9%	64.9%
<i>39. My teachers expect me to go to college.</i>	9.5%	70.6%
<i>40. I have not ditched any classes this year.</i>	17.6%	74.1%
41. I get academic/career planning help from my counselor when I need it.*	25.7%	36.0%

Note. 2010: n=5,834. 2011: n=5,718. Item #22, "How far do you think you will go in school?" is not displayed due to scale differences. Italicized/bolded Items indicate agreement rates exceed 60%. *: question abbreviated for report.

Table 6. Item Agreement Rates: High School Results

Item	%Dis/SD	%Ag/SA
1. I have an adult at school I trust.	21.6%	57.6%
2. At school, I feel safe.	17.0%	47.9%
3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g. hit, shoved, kicked).	65.4%	20.2%
4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.	18.4%	60.3%
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers.	20.7%	44.2%
6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*	69.1%	15.4%
7. At school, I feel afraid.	75.7%	10.4%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	49.9%	22.1%
9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.	63.4%	13.2%
10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.	18.5%	54.3%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial/ethnic backgrounds harassed*	41.3%	34.4%
12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons.	71.5%	15.5%
13. Boys and girls have the same opportunities at this school.	12.7%	65.9%
14. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.	8.9%	75.0%
15. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.	13.6%	63.7%
16. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed.	16.2%	53.3%
17. I feel safe going to and from school.	17.7%	51.2%
18. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*	80.4%	9.8%
19. If I was harassed through internet or text I would discuss it with an adult*	34.8%	36.2%
20. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.	75.7%	11.9%
21. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	24.0%	35.5%
23. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	15.1%	59.0%
24. I feel supported and respected by counselors.	13.4%	59.6%
25. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant/vice principal	20.4%	43.9%
26. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	24.4%	39.4%
27. I feel supported and respected by other students.	18.6%	44.6%
28. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	24.4%	44.5%
29. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.	14.9%	60.8%
30. I am challenged to do my best work at school.	14.1%	59.5%
31. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	28.7%	38.1%
32. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.	14.8%	53.7%
33. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.	8.6%	76.8%
34. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	51.6%	15.5%
35. I treat my teacher with respect.	7.7%	76.0%
36. I follow the rules at school	12.4%	58.3%
37. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	22.7%	35.7%
38. I learn a lot from my classes.	13.2%	56.4%
39. My teachers expect me to go to college.	11.6%	63.9%
40. I have not ditched any classes this year.	36.4%	50.2%
41. I get academic/career planning help from my counselor when I need it.*	20.4%	48.1%

Note. 2010: n=5,770. 2011: n=4,764. Item #22, How far do you think you will go in school?" is not displayed due to scale differences. Italicized/bolded Items indicate agreement rates exceed 60%. *: question abbreviated for report.

Table 7. Response Rates for Item: How far do you think you will go in school?

Response	Overall		Middle School		High School	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Will not finish High School	3.3%	337	3.0%	170	3.6%	167
GED	3.4%	346	3.3%	186	3.4%	160
High School Diploma	17.8%	1,833	16.6%	933	19.3%	900
Bachelor's degree	30.1%	3,099	27.6%	1,557	33.1%	1,542
Master's degree, PhD or other*	45.5%	4,681	49.5%	2,786	40.6%	1,895

Note. Reflects responses to Item #22 (overall); responses are omitted in table four due to different response scale.