



Division of Accountability & Research

Classified Staff Climate Survey Executive Summary February 2015

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, treated fairly, and with respect. In order to evaluate the professional climate in the Aurora Public Schools as perceived by employees, the ninth annual classified staff survey was administered in January and February of 2015.

Survey Development

The Classified staff survey was first administered during the spring of 2007. The items were developed with input from the Classified Employees Council, staff focus groups, district leadership, and the Division of Accountability and Research. The items were designed to reflect attitudes related to clarity of vision, communication, morale, program support, trust, and work conditions.

Although much of the classified staff survey remained the same, changes were made to the classified staff survey for the current administration. First, all reference to the VISTA 2015 strategic plan was removed and replaced with a generic reference to the strategic plan. This affected three questions (items 3, 4, and 22). Second, on the recommendations of CEC, the internal auditor, and the district leadership team, six questions were added to the survey. These questions are listed below. Third, the question about site location was edited to allow staff to indicate a specific school (e.g., Altura, Arkansas, etc.) instead of generally indicating that they are at a school site or district site. Due to the specificity of this question, responding to it was optional. Fourth, one question – related to student mentorship - was removed from the survey because the Classified Employees Council felt that it was no longer relevant.

Added Questions

- Q24. I am given opportunities to influence decisions at my *school/department*.
- Q25. I am given opportunities to influence decisions at the *district*.
- Q28. The process for performance evaluations is clear.
- Q29. The process for performance evaluations is being followed.
- Q31. Staff at my site respect people from different backgrounds and cultures.
- Q39. I feel prepared to deal with each of the following emergency situations:
 - Lockdown
 - Tornado
 - Fire Drill

Removed Question

- Q36. I believe the student mentoring program was beneficial for my mentee.

Survey Participants

The Classified staff climate survey was provided to all staff via the use of an on-line survey tool or by hard copy in January and February of 2015. A total of 787 surveys were completed with 90% submitted on-line. The percentage of responses to the survey represented 43% of the district's classified staff. This response rate was 3% less than the survey response rate from the previous year. The total percentage of staff responding to the survey since its inception in 2007 can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Classified Survey: Historical Percent Response Rates

Job Classification	Total	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	9-Yr Ch.
Overall	787	39%	41%	70%	67%	59%	59%	51%	46%	43%	+4%

Note. Total reflects number of survey responses in 2014.

The number of staff responding to the survey has ranged from 43% to 59% over the past four years. These rates are significantly greater than those of the first two years of implementation (approximately 7% greater). However, the trend for the response rate has been declining over the last five years since reaching a peak response rate of 70% in 2009. Of the staff who responded to questions about job location and job classification, 81% indicated they worked at a school site, and 37% selected paraeducator/educational assistant as their job classification.

Survey Results: Overall

The survey items have been examined based on overall and item specific responses. Although six items were added to the survey this year, the majority of items have remained relatively consistent between years allowing us to perform a simple longitudinal examination of overall results. All items were worded in such a way that agreement indicates favorable outcomes. Table 2 illustrates the overall agreement rates for the past two years.

Table 2. Overall Survey Agreement Rates

% Disagree/Strongly Disagree			Neutral %		% Agree/Strongly Agree		
2014	2015	Change	2014	2015	2014	2015	Change
13.0%	13.6%	0.4%	18.8%	19.0%	68.2%	67.4%	-0.8%

The data indicate that overall district agreement rates decreased slightly from the prior year. Additionally, there was an increase of 0.4% for the overall district disagreement rate. These changes are not considered significant.

Survey Results: Individual Items

Overall, 29 of 43 items (67%) met or exceeded a 60% agreement rate and only six items had agreement rates below 50%. Classified staff in APS consistently express strong agreement with items concerning morale. Staff responses exceeded 90% agreement rates on questions about enjoyment of work, belief that their job is important, and taking pride in the work that they do. The majority of classified staff agreed with questions about the clarity of the district's vision, as all items in this category exceeded 60% agreement.

Staff responses to survey items related to perceptions of program support indicate lesser agreement than other survey categories with 4 of the 6 items in this category having agreement rates less than 60%. Unlike last year, where the items with the lowest percentage of agreement were: “Based on my experience there’s a positive relationship between the Classified Employee Council and the district” and “I am familiar with the functions of the Classified Employees Council”, this year the item with the lowest agreement rate was “I am given opportunities to influence decisions at the district”. However, the questions about the Classified Employees Council had the second and third lowest agreement rate, albeit an improvement from the prior year. The largest increase in agreement rates this year is in staff perceptions that their work is important and contributes to the success of the district. Table 3 presents agreement and change rates by item and category.

Conclusions

- The response rate for the 2015 Classified Staff survey decreased by 3 percentage points this year (46% to 43%). 81% of the respondents indicated that they worked at school sites.
- The overall aggregate agreement rate decreased this year (68.2% to 67.4%) but remained moderately high, indicating satisfaction among classified staff with the overall climate in APS.
- Most survey items continue to show moderate agreement rates and remain higher than agreement rates within both the Licensed and Administrative/Professional-Technical staff surveys. Individual item agreement rates experienced very limited change between years with most changing by less than 5%.
- Areas of strength are related to understanding work responsibilities, feeling pride in work, enjoyment of work, and seeing one’s work as valuable. Areas of concern continue to be the perception of trust in district decision-makers and around the Classified Employees Council.

Table 3. Item Agreement Rates with Between-Year Change by Category

Item	Ag./SA	Change
Clarity of Vision		
1. APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement.	67.0%	-1.3%
2. I understand my role and responsibilities as an employee of APS.	91.3%	0.0%
3. I know how my work relates to the district's goals and priorities.	82.4%	7.2%
4. My work is important and contributes to the success of the district.	90.9%	11.6%
5. The district sets high and realistic expectations for students.	62.0%	-0.9%
6. Everyone in the school community is accountable for the academic success of students.	76.4%	-1.5%
Communication		
7. Department administrators/supervisors share information regularly with employees.	51.3%	-4.1%
8. Clear goals and objectives have been defined for my job.	71.1%	-2.1%
9. My supervisor encourages me to provide suggestions on ways to improve programs or services at my work site.	61.3%	-5.0%
10. Decisions made in APS are based on communicated data and information.	52.4%	3.4%
14. I feel free to express my professional opinions at work.	56.9%	-4.6%
19. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my supervisor.	65.5%	-4.7%
20. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my co-workers.	72.9%	-0.8%
Trust & Morale		
11. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in the district.	45.5%	3.2%
12. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in my school/department.	54.3%	-1.9%
15. I feel valued as an employee of APS.	56.7%	-5.0%
17. I am treated with respect by my supervisor.	74.2%	-3.4%
18. I am treated with respect by my co-workers.	77.1%	-2.9%
24. I am given opportunities to influence decisions at my school/department.	49.5%	--
25. I am given opportunities to influence decisions at the district.	30.6%	--
33. I like the kind of work I do.	91.1%	-2.8%
24. My job is important.	94.7%	-1.7%
35. I am proud of the work I do.	96.9%	0.3%
36. I feel appreciated for the work I do.	66.3%	-4.7%
37. I am satisfied with my job.	77.5%	1.4%
Work Conditions		
13. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my work site.	58.2%	-5.4%
16. There is a professional atmosphere for staff working in APS.	60.5%	-3.0%
26. My principal/supervisor has a clear understanding of my skills and abilities.	67.1%	-4.0%
27. My performance evaluations are fair.	69.4%	-5.4%
28. The process for Performance evaluations is clear.	66.7%	--
29. The process for performance evaluations is being followed.	64.4%	--
30. Employees are treated fairly and consistently at my site.	54.3%	-2.6%
32. I feel safe in the workplace.	77.0%	0.9%

Note. All responses of "not applicable" were omitted from this analysis. 2014: n=836. 2015: n=787.

Item	Ag./SA	Change
Program Support		
21. I receive the necessary training to do high quality work.	63.1%	-2.2%
22. My supervisor supports and encourages my desire to participate in district committees (including strategic planning and/or the Classified Employee Council).	50.0%	-1.2%
23. I have the necessary tools I need to do high quality work efficiently.	66.5%	-2.0%
38. I am satisfied with the professional development opportunities provided to me by the district.	49.9%	-0.9%
40. Based on my experience there's a positive relationship between the Classified Employee Council and the district.	44.1%	2.3%
41. I am familiar with the functions of the Classified Employees Council.	41.2%	0.3%