



Division of Accountability & Research

Classified Staff Climate Survey Executive Summary February 2012

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 fifth annual classified staff survey was administered in January of 2012.

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.

While the survey was slightly revised during the 2010-11 school year, no additional revisions were made for the current administration of the survey.

Survey Participants

The Classified staff climate survey was provided to all staff via the use of an on-line survey tool and by hard copy in January 2012. A total of 1005 surveys were completed with 86% being submitted on-line. The percentage of responses to the survey approximated 59% of the district's classified staff. This response rate mirrored 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	6-Yr Ch.
Overall	1005	39%	41%	70%	67%	59%	59%	+20%

Note. Total reflects number of survey responses in 2012.

The number of staff responding to the survey has ranged from 67% to 59% over the past three years. These rates are significantly greater than those of the first two years of implementation (approximately 20% greater). However, the rates over the last two years are eight percent lower than in 2010. Of the staff who responded to questions about service years, job location, and job classification, 45.1% reported that they had been employed by the district from 1 to 6 years (see table 2), 69% indicated they

worked at a school site, and 37% selected paraeducator/educational assistant as their job classification.

Table 2. Length of Service within APS

Length of Service	Percent	Count
1-3 years	23.2%	229
4-6 years	21.9%	216
7-10 years	20.7%	204
11-20 years	22.7%	224
20+ years	11.6%	114

Note.18 participants failed to identify the number of years they had been employed by the district.

Survey Results: Overall

The survey items have been examined based on overall and item specific responses. The items have remained relatively consistent between years allowing us to perform a simple longitudinal examination of overall results. All items are aligned so agreement indicates favorable outcomes. Table 3 illustrates the overall agreement rates for the past two years.

Table 3. Overall Survey Agreement Rates

% Disagree/Strongly Disagree			Neutral %		% Agree/Strongly Agree		
2011	2012	Change	2011	2012	2011	2012	Change
13.3%	14.5%	+1.2%	17.9%	17.8%	68.8%	67.7%	-1.1%

The data indicate that overall district agreement rates were relatively stable between years. Overall, there was a 1.1% decrease in agreement between 2010 and 2011 and an increase of 1.2% in disagreement rates. This change is not considered significant using a 5% change criteria (i.e. $\geq 5\%$ is meaningful). While the two-year change is not considered significant, it should be noted that since the initial survey implementation in 2007 agreement rates have increased by 6.5% which exceeds the criterion for meaningful growth.

Survey Results: Individual Items

Overall, 24 of 35 items (69%) exceeded a 60% agreement rate and only three items had agreement rates below 50%. The highest agreement rates were associated with items concerning morale which indicates that most staff enjoy their work, believe it's important, and they're proud of the work that they do. Additionally, classified staff mostly agreed with questions about the clarity of the district's vision as all items in this category exceeded 60% agreement. Classified staff did not agree as much with program support with 4 of the 6 items in this category earning agreement rates less than 60%. The lowest agreement rate was associated with the item, "I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in the district. (42%). Compared to the previous year, more staff agree that their work is important and contributes to the success of the

VISTA 2015 Plan and a lower percentage of staff agree that the district has set a clear direction for improving student achievement. Table 4 presents agreement and change rates by item and category.

Conclusions

- The 2012 Classified Staff survey had a response rate of 59% which mirrors the response rate from the previous year but is 8 percentage points lower than in 2010. Forty-five percent of survey participants have been employed with APS from one to six years and most worked at school sites.
- The overall aggregate agreement rates decreased by 1.1% between years although the current year agreement rate of 68% still indicates high satisfaction among classified staff with the overall climate APS.
- Most survey items continue to show moderate agreement rates. Overall, item agreement rates are higher than that identified 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 3%.
- Areas of strength are related to understanding work responsibilities, feeling pride in work, enjoyment of work, and seeing ones work as valuable. An area of concern is related to trust in district decision-makers.

Table 4. Item Agreement Rates with Between-Year Change by Category

Item	Ag./SA	Change
<u>Clarity of Vision</u>		
1. APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement	68.8%	-6.2%
2. I understand my roles and responsibilities as an employee of APS	89.1%	-0.7%
3. I know how my work relates to the district's goals as stated in the VISTA 2015*	72.7%	0.7%
4. My work is important and contributes to the success of the VISTA 2015 plan	77.9%	1.5%
5. The district sets high and realistic expectations for students	62.1%	-3.7%
6. Everyone in the school is accountable for the academic success of students*	79.1%	-0.7%
<u>Communication</u>		
7. Department administrators/supervisors share information regularly with employees	54.1%	-3.4%
8. Clear goals and objectives have been defined for my job	70.9%	-0.8%
9. My supervisor encourages me to provide suggestions on ways to improve programs*	64.1%	-0.7%
10. Decisions made in APS are based on communicated data and information	50.1%	-1.3%
14. I feel free to express my professional opinions at work	58.4%	-2.1%
19. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my supervisor	67.6%	0.1%
20. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my co-workers	72.5%	-2.2%
<u>Trust & Morale</u>		
11. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in the district	42.2%	-0.8%
12. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in my school/department	55.7%	-3.2%
15. I feel valued as an employee of APS	59.0%	1.1%
17. I am treated with respect by my supervisor	75.5%	-1.8%
18. I am treated with respect by my co-workers	81.0%	0.8%
28. I like the kind of work I do	91.7%	1.1%
29. My job is important	94.7%	1.1%
30. I am proud of the work I do	96.3%	0.4%
31. I feel appreciated for the work I do	68.1%	-2.3%
32. I am satisfied with my job	77.4%	-0.7%
<u>Work Conditions</u>		
13. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my worksite	60.3%	-1.8%
16. There is a professional atmosphere for staff working in APS	61.6%	-2.2%
24. My principal/supervisor has a clear understanding of my skills and abilities	70.1%	-0.7%
25. My performance evaluations are fair	75.7%	1.0%
26. Employees are treated fairly and consistently at my site	57.0%	-1.4%
27. I feel safe in the workplace	80.7%	0.8%

Item	Ag./SA	Change
Program Support		
21. I receive the necessary training to do high quality work	67.6%	0.8%
22. My supervisor supports/encourages my desire to participate in committees*	50.0%	-3.1%
23. I have the necessary tools I need to do high quality work efficiently	69.4%	1.7%
33. I am satisfied with the PD opportunities provided to me by the district*	52.2%	-1.0%
34. Based on my experiences, there's a positive relation between the CEC/district*	45.1%	-1.8%
35. I am familiar with the functions of the Classified Employees Council	46.4%	-3.2%

Note. All responses of "not applicable" were omitted from this analysis. *: question abbreviated for report. 2011: n=997. 2012: n=1005. Italicized/bolded Items indicate meaningful positive change.