



## **Division of Accountability & Research**

### **Classified Staff Climate Survey Executive Summary February 2013**

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 seventh annual classified staff survey was administered in January of 2013.

#### **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.

The main content of the survey has not changed over the past two years. The only changes to the latest administration of the survey were in the collection of demographic information. This year, the item related to years of service in the district was removed primarily to ensure the confidentiality of staff at district sites with smaller pools of respondents.

#### **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 2013. A total of 893 surveys were completed with 90% submitted on-line. The percentage of responses to the survey approximated 51% of the district's classified staff. This response rate was 8% 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**

<b>Job Classification</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>7-Yr Ch.</b>
Overall	893	39%	41%	70%	67%	59%	59%	51%	+12%

**Note.** Total reflects number of survey responses in 2013.

The number of staff responding to the survey has ranged from 67% to 51% over the past four years. These rates are significantly greater than those of the first two years of implementation (approximately 12% greater). However, the rates over the last two years are eight percent lower than in 2011. Of the staff who responded to questions about job location and job

classification, 73% indicated they worked at a school site, and 37.1% selected paraeducator/educational assistant as their job classification.

### 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 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		
2012	2013	Change	2012	2013	2012	2013	Change
14.5%	13.2%	-1.3%	17.8%	18.7%	67.7%	68.2%	+0.5%

The data indicate that overall district agreement rates were relatively stable between years with an increase of 0.5% while the overall district disagreement rate decreased by 1.3 percentage points. This change is not considered significant. 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 7.0%.

### Survey Results: Individual Items

Overall, 25 of 35 items (71%) met or exceeded a 60% agreement rate and only three 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 mostly agreed with questions about the clarity of the district’s vision as all items in this category exceeded 65% 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 earning agreement rates less than 60%. Although the agreement rate for the item, “I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in the district” increased by 2 percentage points this year (42.2% to 44.5%), the agreement rate continues to be the lowest among all survey items.

The largest increase in agreement rates this year is in staff perceptions that the district has set a clear direction for improving student achievement (+4.0%) and has set high and realistic expectations for students (+3.4%). Fewer staff agree this year that they receive the necessary training to do high quality work (-4.3%) and that they feel safe in their workplace (-3.8%). Table 3 presents agreement and change rates by item and category.

## Conclusions

- The response rate for the 2013 Classified Staff survey decreased by 8 percentage points this year (51% to 59%). Almost 75% of the respondents indicated that they worked at school sites.
- The overall aggregate agreement rate slightly increased this year (67.7% to 68.2%) indicating high 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 3%.
- Areas of strength are related to understanding work responsibilities, feeling pride in work, enjoyment of work, and seeing one's work as valuable. An area of concern continues to be the perception of trust in district decision-makers.

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

Item	Ag./SA	Change
<b><u>Clarity of Vision</u></b>		
1. APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement.	72.6%	4.0%
2. I understand my role and responsibilities as an employee of APS.	89.8%	0.7%
3. I know how my work relates to the district's goals and priorities as stated in the VISTA 2015 Plan.	72.7%	0.0%
4. My work is important and contributes to the success of the VISTA 2015 Plan.	76.7%	-1.2%
5. The district sets high and realistic expectations for students.	65.5%	3.4%
6. Everyone in the school community is accountable for the academic success of students.	78.5%	-0.6%
<b><u>Communication</u></b>		
7. Department administrators/supervisors share information regularly with employees.	52.8%	-1.3%
8. Clear goals and objectives have been defined for my job.	72.3%	1.4%
9. My supervisor encourages me to provide suggestions on ways to improve programs or services at my work site.	63.9%	-0.2%
10. Decisions made in APS are based on communicated data and information.	50.2%	0.2%
14. I feel free to express my professional opinions at work.	60.0%	1.6%
19. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my supervisor.	68.8%	1.2%
20. My ideas and suggestions are respected by my co-workers.	72.9%	0.5%
<b><u>Trust &amp; Morale</u></b>		
11. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in the district.	44.5%	2.3%
12. I trust the people who make decisions that affect me in my school/department.	57.7%	2.0%
15. I feel valued as an employee of APS.	60.7%	1.6%
17. I am treated with respect by my supervisor.	76.9%	1.4%
18. I am treated with respect by my co-workers.	78.7%	-2.2%
28. I like the kind of work I do.	93.0%	1.3%
29. My job is important.	94.8%	0.1%
30. I am proud of the work I do.	96.4%	0.0%
31. I feel appreciated for the work I do.	69.4%	1.3%
32. I am satisfied with my job.	76.8%	-0.6%
<b><u>Work Conditions</u></b>		
13. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my work site.	59.3%	-1.0%
16. There is a professional atmosphere for staff working in APS.	64.8%	3.1%
24. My principal/supervisor has a clear understanding of my skills and abilities.	71.4%	1.3%
25. My performance evaluations are fair.	75.5%	-0.2%
26. Employees are treated fairly and consistently at my site.	57.3%	0.3%
27. I feel safe in the workplace.	76.9%	-3.8%

Item	Ag./SA	Change
<b><u>Program Support</u></b>		
21. I receive the necessary training to do high quality work.	63.3%	<b>-4.3%</b>
22. My supervisor supports and encourages my desire to participate in district committees (including VISTA planning and/or the Classified Employee Council).	53.0%	<b>3.0%</b>
23. I have the necessary tools I need to do high quality work efficiently.	68.3%	<b>-1.1%</b>
33. I am satisfied with the professional development opportunities provided to me by the district.	52.9%	<b>0.8%</b>
34. Based on my experience there's a positive relationship between the Classified Employee Council and the district.	46.1%	<b>1.0%</b>
35. I am familiar with the functions of the Classified Employees Council.	46.3%	<b>-0.1%</b>

**Note.** All responses of "not applicable" were omitted from this analysis. 2012: n=1005. 2013: n=893.