



## Division of Accountability & Research

### **Licensed 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 licensed staff climate survey was administered in January of 2012.

#### **Survey Development**

The Licensed staff climate survey was first administered during the spring of 2007. The items were developed with input from the Aurora Education Association, 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. In December of 2011, items were again reviewed by AEA, principals, and the Division of Accountability and Research. The only item revisions made were the rewording of the question stem for items 6 and 7 from “I am comfortable” to “I feel safe” and the following:

##### Added

- *I have the support I need to deliver culturally responsive instruction and teaching.*
- *I believe the district is becoming more effective in meeting the needs of special education students.*

##### Removed

- *I am able to influence the decisions made by the district.*

#### **Survey Participants**

The Licensed staff climate survey was provided to all staff via the use of an on-line survey tool. A total of 1,893 surveys were completed. The percentage of responses based on the overall number of licensed staff was approximately 93%. The total percentage of staff responding to the survey since its inception in 2007 can be found in table 1.

**Table 1. Licensed 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>6-Yr Ch.</b> |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Overall                   | 1,893        | 60%         | 90%         | 87%         | 88%         | 92%         | 93%         | +33%            |

**Note.** Total reflects number of survey responses in 2012.

The number of staff responding to the survey has ranged from 88% to 93% the past three years. These rates are significantly greater than those of the first year of implementation (i.e. 33% greater).

Of the 1,893 respondents 1,768 indicated their position in the district and of those respondents, 11.4% identified themselves as an educational professional other than a teacher (school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, etc.). A little more than half of the respondents (50.3%) reported that they had been employed by the district from 1 to 6 years (see table 2),

**Table 2. Length of Service within APS**

| Length of Service | Percent | Count |
|-------------------|---------|-------|
| First Year        | 9.8%    | 154   |
| 2-3 Years         | 17.6%   | 275   |
| 4-6 Years         | 22.9%   | 358   |
| 7-10 Years        | 22.0%   | 344   |
| 11-20 Years       | 18.4%   | 287   |
| 20+ Years         | 9.3%    | 146   |

**Note.** 329 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 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 | 2010      | 2012  | 2011                   | 2012  | Change |
| 23.8%                        | 24.1% | +0.3%  | 16.9%     | 18.1% | 59.3%                  | 57.8% | -1.5%  |

The data indicate that overall district agreement rates were somewhat stable between years. Overall, a 1.5% decrease in agreement was noted between 2011 and 2012 with an increase of 0.3% in disagreement rates. This change is not considered significant using a 5% change criteria (i.e.  $\geq 5\%$  is considered meaningful).

### Survey Results: Individual Items

Overall, 24 of 50 items (48%) exceeded 60% agreement rates indicating moderate satisfaction concerning overall climate. The 48% rate is lower than that observed for classified staff (69%) and administrative/professional-technical staff (71%). The highest agreement rates were associated with items concerning program support and school

work conditions which indicates that staff believes they work in safe, professional, and cooperative work-sites. In addition, they believe that ELL, art, music, physical education, and library/media programs are supported within their school. The lowest reported agreement rates were associated with the “trust” and “communication” categories with more than a third of the items in each category items having agreement rates below 45%. A little more than half of the respondents disagreed with the statement that they are given opportunities to influence decisions made by the district (51%). Over the past year there was a 10 percentage point increase in licensed staff who agreed that adequate student data and information is used to make decisions in the district. Additionally, the percentage of licensed staff who agreed that there is a positive relationship between the AEA and district increased by 9 percentage points from 33.5% in 2011 to 42.5% in 2012. Table four presents agreement and change rates by item and category.

### **Conclusions**

- The Licensed Staff survey had a response rate of 93% which is a 1% increase from last year. Just over half of survey participants have been employed within APS from one to six years.
- The overall aggregate agreement rates were largely stable between years with a current overall year agreement rate of 57.8%.
- Most survey items continue to show moderate agreement rates. Overall item agreement rates are lower than that identified within the Administrative/Professional-Technical and Classified staff surveys. There was limited positive change in item agreement between years with only two items increasing by more than five percent.
- Areas of strength are related to school work conditions and support of programs. Areas of concern are related to trust and communication. Few respondents agreed that they are given opportunities to influence the decisions made by the district and that they feel safe stating their opinions about APS programs.

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

| Item   | Ag/SA | 1-Yr Ch. | 5-Yr Ch. |
|--|-------|----------|----------|
| <b><u>Clarity of Vision</u></b>  |       |          |          |
| 1. I understand the long-term vision of APS  | 77.7% | -0.2%    | -5.3%    |
| 3. I know how my work relates to the district's goals/priorities as stated in VISTA* | 65.6% | -0.1%    | -8.4%    |
| 4. I believe APS has set a clear direction for improving student achievement         | 54.4% | -3.3%    | 1.4%     |
| 15. I understand the roles and responsibilities of the APS Board of Education        | 52.3% | -3.3%    | -        |
| <b><u>Communication</u></b>  |       |          |          |
| 2. District administrators share the information I need to perform my job            | 61.8% | -1.7%    | 13.8%    |
| 5. I am encouraged to provide district suggestions on ways to improve programs*      | 29.6% | -6.3%    | -3.4%    |
| 6. I feel safe in stating my opinions about APS programs even if I disagree*         | 29.3% | -2.3%    | 3.3%     |
| 7. I feel safe in stating my opinions about issues facing APS if I disagree*         | 30.5% | -2.4%    | 2.5%     |
| 16. Building Administrators share the information that I need to perform my job      | 68.7% | -1.0%    | 20.7%    |
| 31. I am kept informed of the school improvement plan (SIP)                          | 81.5% | 1.7%     | -        |
| 33. The performance evaluation process is fair in my school                          | 61.6% | -1.9%    | 15.6%    |
| <b><u>Morale</u></b>   |       |          |          |
| 13. I would encourage someone to work for APS  | 48.9% | -3.5%    | 6.9%     |
| 39. I feel appreciated for the work I do   | 55.2% | -4.8%    | 17.2%    |
| 40. There is a spirit of teamwork and cooperation at my site                         | 58.3% | -4.1%    | 19.3%    |
| 41. There is a professional atmosphere for staff working at my school/site           | 69.1% | -2.5%    | 24.1%    |
| <b><u>Program Support</u></b>  |       |          |          |
| 43. My school has effective plans in place to assist ELL students                    | 67.7% | -3.3%    | -        |
| 44. I believe the district is becoming more effective in meeting needs of ELL*       | 66.1% | 0.5%     | -        |
| 46. I believe the Art programs are supported at my building                          | 76.0% | -2.8%    | -        |
| 47. I believe the Music programs are supported at my building                        | 76.2% | -2.5%    | -        |
| 48. I believe the Physical Education programs are supported at my building           | 72.1% | -5.3%    | -        |
| 49. I believe the library/media programs are supported at my building                | 69.3% | -2.1%    | -        |

| Item   | Ag/SA | 1-Yr Ch. | 5-Yr Ch. |
|--|-------|----------|----------|
| <b><u>Trust</u></b>  |       |          |          |
| 8. I trust the people who make district decisions that affect me                     | 30.0% | -2.9%    | 2.0%     |
| 10. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect within APS                    | 34.7% | -0.9%    | 9.7%     |
| 14. Based on my experience there's a positive relation between the AEA & district*.  | 42.5% | 9.0%     | -        |
| 17. I trust the people who make school decisions that affect me                      | 53.1% | -5.9%    | 18.1%    |
| 20. There is an atmosphere of trust/mutual respect between building admin. & staff*  | 50.2% | -6.1%    | 19.2%    |
| 21. There is an atmosphere of trust/mutual respect among teachers in our building    | 69.1% | -3.0%    | 38.1%    |
| 22. I am trusted to make sound professional decisions about instruction              | 68.2% | -1.5%    | 21.2%    |
| <b><u>Work Conditions (District)</u></b>   |       |          |          |
| 9. I am given opportunities to influence the decisions that are made by the district | 22.3% | -4.7%    | -        |
| 11. District professional development has provided me with instructional strategies* | 53.6% | -1.3%    | 1.6%     |
| 12. I believe decisions made in APS are based on adequate student data/info.*        | 61.5% | 10.6%    | 19.5%    |
| 25. Teachers are allowed to focus on educating students with minimal interruption    | 53.2% | -5.4%    | 18.2%    |
| 26. I have sufficient access to instructional materials and resources                | 72.6% | -1.1%    | 15.6%    |
| 27. I have sufficient access to instructional technology                             | 72.3% | -2.6%    | 16.3%    |
| <b><u>Work Conditions (School)</u></b>   |       |          |          |
| 18. I am given opportunities to influence decisions that are made by my school/site  | 59.2% | -4.6%    | -        |
| 19. I am able to influence the decisions that are made by my school/site.            | 51.4% | -2.9%    | 20.4%    |
| 23. I believe decisions at my site are based on adequate student data/ information*  | 71.1% | 4.9%     | 29.1%    |
| 24. Decisions made at my site are based on the best interests of students            | 57.9% | -5.5%    | 17.9%    |
| 28. Faculty has an effective process for group decisions & solving problems*         | 49.7% | -4.5%    | 19.7%    |
| 29. Employees are empowered to help solve problems                                   | 55.5% | -3.6%    | 27.5%    |
| 30. I have opportunities to participate in school planning and decision making       | 65.4% | -2.6%    | 18.4%    |
| 32. My principal/supervisor has a clear understanding of the challenges in my job*   | 54.6% | -3.0%    | 8.6%     |
| 34. Building PD has provided me with instructional strategies*                       | 60.0% | -3.0%    | 10.0%    |

|   |       |       |       |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| 35. Teachers and staff work in a school environment that is clean/well maintained | 86.9% | -0.1% | 15.9% |
| 36. Rules for student conduct are consistently enforced by administration         | 50.5% | -3.0% | 19.5% |
| 37. Rules for student conduct are consistently enforced by teaching staff         | 52.0% | -2.6% | 21.0% |
| 38. Staff work in a school environment that is safe                               | 78.0% | -1.0% | 18.0% |

**Note.** All responses of "not applicable" were omitted from this analysis. \*: question abbreviated for report. 2011:n=1916. 2012: n=1893. --: indicates that item was not part of earlier survey administration.