



## **Division of Accountability & Research**

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### **Student Climate Survey Executive Summary (2011-2012)**

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 2012. 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. A 1 to 5 scale was used to measure student agreement and, in most cases, a response of 1 indicated strong disagreement with a survey item and 5 indicated strong agreement. In some cases, though, item scales were reversed-coded and disagreement with the item indicated a favorable outcome.

Several additional items were added for the 2012 administration and they are presented in the table below.

- Q13 Boys and girls have the same academic opportunities at this school.
- Q14 Boys and girls have the same extra-curricular opportunities at this school.
- Q43 I get academic help from my teachers when I need it
- Q44 I feel welcomed when I return to school from an absence.
- Q45 Teachers and counselors in this school stress the need for me to attend school every day.
- Q46 The staff at my school respect students from all cultures and races.
- Q47 At school, I have been harassed because of perceived sexual orientation.
- Q48 At school, I have been sexually harassed.
- Q49 I have witnessed students with disabilities harassed at my school.
- Q50 I have been bullied at my school.

#### **Survey Participants**

The Student Climate survey was administered to all secondary students in January 2012. Based on the number of active students enrolled in the district during this time period a total of 15,508 survey questionnaires were printed and distributed to schools. Of this number, 12,066 surveys were completed, representing an approximate response rate of 77.8% which was an increase of 1.3 percentage points since the inception of the

survey in 2007 and a 7.7% increase in the overall response rate from the previous year. The increase was also evident in the middle and high school surveys with response rate increases of 3.7 and 0.3 percentage points, respectively. The total percentage of students responding to the survey over the last 6 years can be found in table 1.

**Table 1. Student Climate Survey: Historical Percent Response Rates**

Grade Level	Total	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	6 Yr Ch.
Overall	12,066	76.5%	78.5%	73.9%	75.0%	70.1%	77.8%	+1.3%
Middle Schools	6117	82.4%	89.3%	86.9%	86.5%	84.2%	86.1%	+3.7%
High Schools	5949	71.1%	69.5%	64.0%	66.1%	58.3%	70.8%	+0.3%

**Note.** Total reflects number of survey responses in 2012. Pickens Technical College surveys aren't reflected in the presented counts/percentages.

In 2012, the distribution of students reported gender and ethnicity reflected percentages that were very similar to the district population as reported in the October 2011 count. The only exceptions were the percent of students identifying themselves as Native American or Asian which exceeded the district population by more than 2 percentage points. All other groups were within 2 percentage points of the official district enrollment at the secondary level grades. This suggests the surveyed students this year were a generally good representation of the overall secondary population in APS.

### Survey Results

Of the 49 items on the 2012 Student Climate survey, there were 25 items (51.0%) that had favorable agreement rates exceeding 60%. This indicates that, overall, students were moderately satisfied with the climate at their schools (see table 4). In particular, most students appear to recognize the value of education with 78.9% agreeing that if they work hard in school they will have success as an adult and 65.3% believing that the classes at their school are preparing them for the future. There was also strong agreement by students that teachers at their school had expectations for them to graduate from high school (75.4%) and/or go on to college (66.6%).

Students tended to view their schools as safe as most felt that bullying and harassment were not a problem for them at their school. Almost all questions about being personally bullied and harassed were rated favorably by more than 60% of the students surveyed. The favorable rates for these questions ranged from 62.5% strongly disagree/disagree (“I have had someone try to hurt me...”) to 75.9% (“At school I feel afraid”). While student perceptions about their personal experiences with bullying seem positive, their perceptions about the bullying and harassment of *others* were different – Approximately thirty nine percent of students disagreed or strongly disagreed that they had witnessed harassment of students of different cultural, racial, or ethnic backgrounds and 55.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed with a similar question about students with disabilities.

As was the case last year less favorable responses were associated with items concerning interest in class work (Ag/SA: 40.2%), making choices regarding what's studied at school (Ag/SA: 38.2%), consistent enforcement of school rules outside of the classroom (Ag/SA: 38.1%), and belief that belongings are safe at school (Ag/SA: 27.5%). It should be noted, though, that, with the exception of feeling their belongings were safe at school, there was more agreement among students this year for the aforementioned items.

Fifty-nine percent of middle school items exceeded 60% agreement (table 5) while 32.6% of items for high school exhibited the same levels of 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. The only item that had a more than 5% change in favorable agreement rate was at the high school level in the percent of students who disagreed/strongly disagreed with the statement about being threatened or harassed through the internet or text messages. While still fairly high at 73.4%, the favorable rate for this item decreased from 80.4% the year before.

Overall for middle and high schools combined, there were no items that had a favorable rate increase of more than 5% from the previous year. Likewise, there were no items that showed a *decrease* of more than 5% in its favorable rate compared to last year.

In addition to climate questions, students were also asked how much further they believed they would continue with their education. More than 70% of the students surveyed believed they would further their education beyond a high school diploma. By level, 77.7% of the middle school students surveyed believed they would continue onto college and 72.8% of high school students indicated the same. All results for this item are presented in Table 7 below.

### **Conclusions**

- The overall response rate for the 2012 Student Climate Survey was 77.8% which was an increase of more than 7 percentage points over the previous year and a 1.3% increase since the inception of the survey in 2007. More than half of the items surveyed had favorable agreement rates that exceeded 60%. At the middle school level, 59% of items exceeded 60% agreement while 32.6% of the high school items reached a similar rate. 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.
- Perceptions of personal experiences with harassment/bullying were strong areas for this year's survey as was teacher expectations for students to graduate from high school and/or attend college. Bullying/harassment of others, particularly students of different cultural or racial backgrounds appear to be an area of concern as well as low student agreement regarding interest in academic work and the consistent

enforcement of rules outside the classroom. 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%
<b>1. I have an adult at school I trust.</b>	19.7%	<b>62.2%</b>
2. At school, I feel safe.	14.7%	53.8%
<b>3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g., hit, shoved, kicked).</b>	<b>62.5%</b>	23.9%
<b>4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.</b>	17.5%	<b>63.9%</b>
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers	20.9%	45.3%
<b>6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*</b>	<b>65.4%</b>	19.0%
<b>7. At school, I feel afraid.</b>	<b>75.9%</b>	10.3%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	44.3%	27.5%
<b>9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.</b>	<b>65.5%</b>	13.0%
10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.	21.2%	54.1%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds harassed*	38.7%	40.5%
<b>12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons</b>	<b>70.2%</b>	17.4%
<b>13. Boys and girls have the same academic opportunities at this school</b>	13.4%	<b>64.7%</b>
14. Boys and girls have the same extra-curricular opportunities at this school	16.4%	56.1%
<b>15. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.</b>	9.3%	<b>75.4%</b>
<b>16. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.</b>	13.5%	<b>65.3%</b>
17. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed	17.0%	56.2%
18. I feel safe going to and from school.	16.1%	58.5%
<b>19. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*</b>	<b>75.6%</b>	14.2%
20. If threatened by internet/text messages I would discuss it with an adult.*	31.9%	43.0%
<b>21. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.</b>	<b>68.8%</b>	16.4%
22. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	23.7%	38.1%
24. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	17.4%	56.4%
25. I feel supported and respected by counselors.	13.9%	59.7%
26. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant/vice principal.	18.0%	53.4%
27. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	18.9%	48.8%
28. I feel supported and respected by other students.	19.3%	47.4%
29. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	33.7%	38.2%
<b>30. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.</b>	15.0%	<b>62.0%</b>
<b>31. I am challenged to do my best work at school.</b>	13.4%	<b>63.6%</b>
32. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	27.0%	43.0%
33. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.	14.6%	58.9%
<b>34. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.</b>	8.4%	<b>79.8%</b>
35. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	48.7%	16.8%
<b>36. I treat my teacher with respect.</b>	8.9%	<b>71.8%</b>
<b>37. I follow the rules at school.</b>	11.7%	<b>60.7%</b>
38. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	22.5%	40.2%
<b>39. I learn a lot from my classes.</b>	13.1%	<b>60.3%</b>
<b>40. My teachers expect me to go to college.</b>	10.8%	<b>66.6%</b>
<b>41. I have not ditched any classes this year.</b>	27.6%	<b>60.6%</b>
42. I get academic/career planning help from my school counselor when I need it.	23.8%	41.1%

Item	Dis/SD%	Ag/SA%
<b>43. I get academic help from my teachers when I need it</b>	13.4%	<b>60.1%</b>
44. I feel welcomed when I return to school from an absence.	24.1%	43.7%
45. Teachers and counselors in this school stress the need for me to attend school every day.	20.0%	46.9%
<b>46. The staff at my school respect students from all cultures and races.</b>	16.3%	<b>61.7%</b>
<b>47. At school, I have been harassed because of perceived sexual orientation.</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	11.3%
<b>48. At school, I have been sexually harassed.</b>	<b>75.1%</b>	13.7%
49. I have witnessed students with disabilities harassed at my school.	55.2%	26.2%
<b>50. I have been bullied at my school.</b>	<b>66.7%</b>	19.9%

**Note.** 2011: n=10,482. 2012: n= 12,066. Item #23, 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%
<b>1. I have an adult at school I trust.</b>	18.1%	<b>65.6%</b>
2. At school, I feel safe.	14.7%	57.0%
3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g., hit, shoved, kicked).	59.3%	27.0%
<b>4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.</b>	16.6%	<b>67.0%</b>
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers	18.7%	50.2%
<b>6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*</b>	<b>63.2%</b>	22.2%
<b>7. At school, I feel afraid.</b>	<b>76.7%</b>	10.1%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	39.5%	33.7%
<b>9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.</b>	<b>68.2%</b>	12.0%
10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.	19.6%	58.8%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds harassed*	37.3%	44.2%
<b>12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons</b>	<b>69.0%</b>	19.2%
<b>13. Boys and girls have the same academic opportunities at this school</b>	14.3%	<b>63.2%</b>
14. Boys and girls have the same extra-curricular opportunities at this school	16.6%	54.2%
<b>15. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.</b>	8.0%	<b>78.5%</b>
<b>16. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.</b>	11.1%	<b>71.6%</b>
<b>17. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed</b>	16.3%	<b>60.9%</b>
<b>18. I feel safe going to and from school.</b>	15.2%	<b>62.8%</b>
<b>19. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*</b>	<b>78.3%</b>	13.7%
20. If threatened by internet/text messages I would discuss it with an adult.*	28.2%	49.6%
<b>21. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.</b>	<b>66.5%</b>	19.2%
22. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	22.6%	41.1%
24. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	18.2%	57.9%
<b>25. I feel supported and respected by counselors.</b>	12.3%	<b>61.5%</b>
<b>26. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant/vice principal.</b>	16.4%	<b>60.2%</b>
27. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	15.0%	55.9%
28. I feel supported and respected by other students.	19.9%	49.5%

Item	Dis/SD%	Ag/SA%
29. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	42.6%	30.5%
<b>30. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.</b>	13.9%	<b>66.0%</b>
<b>31. I am challenged to do my best work at school.</b>	11.4%	<b>69.8%</b>
32. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	27.4%	44.4%
<b>33. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.</b>	13.2%	<b>64.7%</b>
<b>34. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.</b>	6.9%	<b>84.1%</b>
35. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	51.0%	15.6%
<b>36. I treat my teacher with respect.</b>	9.2%	<b>71.2%</b>
<b>37. I follow the rules at school.</b>	10.9%	<b>62.8%</b>
38. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	21.8%	43.8%
<b>39. I learn a lot from my classes.</b>	11.7%	<b>66.5%</b>
<b>40. My teachers expect me to go to college.</b>	8.7%	<b>72.2%</b>
<b>41. I have not ditched any classes this year.</b>	18.4%	<b>73.7%</b>
42. I get academic/career planning help from my school counselor when I need it.	24.4%	39.6%
<b>43. I get academic help from my teachers when I need it</b>	11.9%	<b>63.8%</b>
44. I feel welcomed when I return to school from an absence.	22.1%	49.3%
45. Teachers and counselors in this school stress the need for me to attend school every day.	18.8%	49.0%
<b>46. The staff at my school respect students from all cultures and races.</b>	14.5%	<b>67.1%</b>
<b>47. At school, I have been harassed because of perceived sexual orientation.</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	11.4%
<b>48. At school, I have been sexually harassed.</b>	<b>77.6%</b>	13.2%
49. I have witnessed students with disabilities harassed at my school.	51.3%	29.9%
<b>50. I have been bullied at my school.</b>	<b>63.1%</b>	24.5%

**Note.** 2011: n=5,718. 2012: n=6,117. Item #23, "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.	21.3%	58.7%
2. At school, I feel safe.	14.7%	50.5%
<b>3. At school, I have had someone try to hurt me (e.g., hit, shoved, kicked).</b>	<b>65.7%</b>	20.6%
<b>4. I have at least one adult in school I can go to when I need help.</b>	18.5%	<b>60.7%</b>
5. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced by teachers	23.3%	40.3%
<b>6. I am put down and harassed at school because I look different*</b>	<b>67.6%</b>	15.6%
<b>7. At school, I feel afraid.</b>	<b>75.2%</b>	10.6%
8. My belongings are safe at school.	49.2%	21.1%
<b>9. Other students don't like me because I am a good student.</b>	<b>62.7%</b>	14.0%
10. In my classes there are rules against name calling/put downs.	22.9%	49.3%
11. I have seen students of different cultural, racial or ethnic backgrounds harassed*	40.1%	36.6%
<b>12. At school, I have been bullied or harassed for racial reasons</b>	<b>71.4%</b>	15.5%
<b>13. Boys and girls have the same academic opportunities at this school</b>	12.5%	<b>66.2%</b>
14. Boys and girls have the same extra-curricular opportunities at this school	16.3%	58.1%
<b>15. My teachers expect me to graduate from high school.</b>	10.6%	<b>72.3%</b>
16. Classes at this school are preparing me for my future.	15.9%	58.9%
17. Adults help if they see someone being bullied or harassed	17.6%	51.3%
18. I feel safe going to and from school.	17.1%	54.0%
<b>19. I have been threatened/harassed through internet or text messages*</b>	<b>72.9%</b>	14.7%
20. If threatened by internet/text messages I would discuss it with an adult.*	35.7%	36.2%
<b>21. I am bullied during the school day at least once per month.</b>	<b>71.2%</b>	13.4%
22. I believe our school rules are consistently enforced outside of my classroom.	24.8%	34.9%
24. I feel supported and respected by my teachers.	16.7%	54.8%
25. I feel supported and respected by counselors.	15.5%	57.8%
26. I feel supported and respected by the principal and assistant/vice principal.	19.6%	46.5%
27. I feel supported and respected by secretaries/administrative assistants.	22.9%	41.5%
28. I feel supported and respected by other students.	18.7%	45.4%
29. I get to make choices about what I will study at school.	24.5%	46.1%
30. I have many opportunities to ask teachers questions about my work.	16.2%	57.9%
31. I am challenged to do my best work at school.	15.4%	57.2%
32. I feel I can go to my teachers with the things that I need to talk about.	26.5%	41.6%
33. My teachers care whether I am successful or not.	16.1%	53.1%
<b>34. If I work hard in school, I will be a successful adult.</b>	10.0%	<b>75.3%</b>
35. Students who are not of my race generally do better in school than I do.	46.3%	18.1%
<b>36. I treat my teacher with respect.</b>	8.6%	<b>72.4%</b>
37. I follow the rules at school.	12.4%	58.5%
38. I am interested in the work I get to do in my classes.	23.2%	36.4%
39. I learn a lot from my classes.	14.5%	54.0%
<b>40. My teachers expect me to go to college.</b>	12.9%	<b>60.9%</b>
41. I have not ditched any classes this year.	37.1%	47.2%



42. I get academic/career planning help from my school counselor when I need it.	23.3%	42.7%
<b>Item</b>	<b>Dis/SD%</b>	<b>Ag/SA%</b>
43. I get academic help from my teachers when I need it	14.8%	56.3%
44. I feel welcomed when I return to school from an absence.	26.1%	38.0%
45. Teachers and counselors in this school stress the need for me to attend school every day.	21.2%	44.8%
46. The staff at my school respect students from all cultures and races.	18.1%	56.2%
<b><i>47. At school, I have been harassed because of perceived sexual orientation.</i></b>	<b>73.0%</b>	11.2%
<b><i>48. At school, I have been sexually harassed.</i></b>	<b>72.4%</b>	14.3%
49. I have witnessed students with disabilities harassed at my school.	59.1%	22.3%
<b><i>50. I have been bullied at my school.</i></b>	<b>70.5%</b>	15.1%

**Note.** 2011: n=4,764. 2012: n=5,949. Item #23, "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	3.0%	382	3.0%	181	3.0%	201
GED	3.5%	455	3.0%	181	4.1%	274
High School Diploma	18.4%	2361	16.4%	992	20.3%	1369
Bachelor's degree	33.1%	4245	30.3%	1835	35.7%	2410
Master's degree, PhD or other*	42.0%	5380	47.4%	2874	37.1%	2506

**Note.** Reflects responses to Item #23 (overall); responses are omitted in table four due to different response scale.