Overview & Goals

1. To consider current understandings of School Climate, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and an effective prosocial improvement process.

2. What an effective school climate/SEL informed improvement effort and how this supports effective disciplinary practice.

3. To support your reflecting on possible 'next steps'

SEL and School Climate: Similar and/or Different?

Understanding/misunderstandings:

Prosocial Labels/Camps #1
- Concepts
- Traditions
- A Prosocial School Improvement Process
An effective prosocial improvement process


Three essential questions:
1. What kind of school do we want ours to be?
2. What are our current strengths, needs and weaknesses?
3. Given the gap between our vision and our current reality, what school-wide and/or instructional and/or relational goals do we want to focus on now?

Importance and Impact

- Great interest on the part of educators.
- Improves behavior and learning:
  - Social emotional skills;
  - Improved attitudes about self, others & school;
  - Positive classroom behavior;
  - 11 percentile point gain on standardized achievement tests;
  - Reduced risk for Conduct problems and emotional distress.
- 21st Century and Workforce skills:
  - 50% of the 16 skills are social, emotional and civic in nature.

Importance and Impact (cont.)

- Social, emotional and civic competencies predicts key young adult outcomes:
  - Kindergartners with higher prosocial competences more likely to:
    - Graduate from high school
    - Complete a college degree
    - Obtain stable employment in young adulthood
    - Less likely to live in public housing
    - Less likely to be involved with the police
    - Less likely to be involved in a detention facility
- The economic value of social, emotional and civic competences: $1 invested = $11 return
- Recommended as the most effective prevention strategy for (i) bully/victim/bystander behavior and, (ii) high school dropouts.
Setting Improvement Goals

An emerging “bridge building” frameworks:

Prosocial Education: Essential Goals
School-wide: (leadership; policy; measurement and a continuous data driven process; adult learning; prosocial education; norms/rules/supports; school-home-community partnerships)

Instructional: (Living example; classroom management & disciplinary practice; pedagogic strategies; curriculum)

Relational: (moment-to-moment; educator/parent/mental health professional partnerships; connections; suicide prevention)

Implementation Strategies: Understanding What Works #9

• Continuous/long-term efforts designed to promote learning, understanding, and working together as a whole school community in order to:
  ➢ Support prosocial learning for all students: Social, emotional and civic as well as cognitive
  ➢ Promote a safe, supportive, engaging and healthy climate for learning and development
  ➢ Prevent mean, cruel and/or bullying behaviors as well as high school dropouts

• Comprehensive efforts that encourage individuals, small/large groups, or whole school community involvement: Systemic, Instructional and Relational Efforts

The School Climate Improvement Process
Research based tasks that shape the improvement process

Stage One: Preparation - Form a representative leadership team; Engage the community to create a shared vision; Promote a culture of problem-solving and trust; Ensure your team has adequate resources; Form Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); Celebrate and build on successes, big and small; Reflect on/document Stage One work.

Stage Two: Evaluation - Choose effective measurement tool(s); Develop an engagement plan; Engage the community, including those who are often disengaged/underrepresented; Administer survey(s); Unpack the evaluation findings as a leadership team and connect with other school-level data; Reflect on/document work in the Stage.

- School climate surveys
- Readiness metrics
- Process metrics
- Community metrics
- Student SEL/“non-cognitive” informed metrics

Stage Three: Action Planning - Empower the school community to understand the findings and collaborate in the action planning process; Develop a school profile of strengths and areas for improvement; Prioritize goals grounded in research and best practices; Develop a short-term/long-term action plan; Analyze and reflect on successes/efforts.

Stage Four: Implementation - Integrate the action plans with current efforts; Implement the action plan; Track benchmarks periodically to ensure fidelity; Adjust plan based on learning; Mobilize the school community around improvement efforts; Reflect on your effectiveness as a leadership team.

Stage Five: Beginning anew in the continuous process of learning and school improvement - Reevaluating the school’s strengths and challenges; Discovering what has changed and how; Discovering what has most helped and hindered further the school climate improvement process; Revising plans to improve the school climate; Reflecting and learning from Stage Five work.

Sustainable Prosocial Improvement Efforts

- District Considerations:
  1) Leadership development: educators and students
  2) District level policy review and reform
  3) PLCs and Network Improvement Communities (NIC)
- Building level Considerations:
  4) Systems to support continuous learning
  5) Honoring others and their contributions
  6) Integrating & coordinating educational, risk prevention & health promotion efforts
  7) Tracking the process and fidelity
  8) The first R: Reflecting, reflecting and reflecting
THANK YOU!

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Footnotes/Citations


17. Principles of School Improvement: Choosing the wrong drivers for whole system reform. Centre for Strategic Education Seminar Series Paper (cont.)