

Record 34 Districts to Use AASB's School Climate Survey

More districts than ever are signed up this year to participate in the spring 2010 School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS), and most of them will be using the new and improved online system (see sidebar).

The 2009 SCCS Statewide Report, sent out electronically last fall to participating districts, has provided some interesting statewide information. It reports results from nearly 27,000 student and 5,200 staff from 24 participating districts, and provides a wealth of information beyond what participating districts receive in their individual district and school-by-school reports.

Analysis of the full statewide sample allows researchers to provide separate results for the large/urban districts (over 5,000 enrollment) and for the small/rural districts. They produced weighted statewide information to provide a snapshot of what the statewide school climate picture would likely look like if all 53 districts were participating, and that allows comparison of results from year to year (back to 2006). It also provides the statistical correlations for student and staff responses between school climate factors and both academic achievement measures and youth risk behaviors.

For 2009, the results showed evidence of a growing improvement in school climate and student connectedness. The findings point to better student involvement in school, fewer instances of delinquent behavior at school, and higher ratings by students and staff for school climate.

The report listed a dozen key findings that emerged statewide:

- There have been consistent yearly improvements in statewide student ratings for school leadership and student involvement and school respectful climate.
- Statewide, there has been a reduction in student reports of drug and alcohol use among peers at school and school events each of the last four years.
- Other aspects of student perceptions of school climate and connectedness (high expectations, school safety, peer climate, caring adults, and parent and community involvement) and student social and emotional learning improved from 2006 to 2008, but changed little from 2008 to 2009.
- Student reports of delinquent behaviors at school and school events declined from 2007 to 2008, and stabilized at this lower level in 2009.
- Overall, staff ratings for school climate improved across most subscales from 2006 to 2008, then were stable from 2008 to 2009. There was a substantial drop in staff reports of student involvement in school decision making from 2008 to 2009 statewide, and specifically among small/rural

school districts.

- At the school level, the higher 2009 *student* ratings for school climate and school connectedness, the greater the 2009 school-wide proficiency rates student on Alaska's Standards Based Assessments (SBAs) across the three subject areas (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics).
- The higher school-level *staff* ratings for school climate, the greater the school-wide proficiency rates for students on Alaska's Standards Based Assessments (SBAs) across the three subject areas (Reading, Writing, and Mathematics). The lower staff reports of student risk behaviors at the school level, the higher the school's proficiency rates on all subject areas of the SBAs.
- There were modest but significant relationships between student risk behaviors and school climate and connectedness each year. The better the student-reported positive school climate and the greater the connectedness to school, the lower the number of incidents of delinquent behavior and drug and alcohol use students reported seeing at school or school events. This result also held true for staff responses: the higher their ratings for school climate, the lower the number of incidents of student delinquent behavior and student drug and alcohol use they reported seeing at school or school events.
- Each year, students from smaller school districts (serving fewer than 5,000 students) tended to provide higher ratings for school climate and connectedness than students from larger districts. In contrast, staff from more rural school districts tended to give lower ratings for school climate across all areas except school safety, where small/rural schools were rated higher.
- Year after year, girls gave significantly higher ratings for school climate and connectedness than boys across almost every subscale except Student Drug and Alcohol Use.
- Across both large/urban and small/rural schools, African American students gave significantly lower ratings for school climate and connectedness than students from other ethnic and racial groups. Students who identified themselves as Alaska Native/American Indian or White (non-Hispanic) tended to give the highest ratings.
- Each year, students who reported that they had someone available outside of school to help them with homework and students who had an adult who knew what they did with their free time gave significantly higher ratings for connectedness to school and more favorable ratings of school climate than did students without outside support and supervision. This result was

consistent across students from all grade levels, both male and female students, and students from all ethnic backgrounds.

To view or download the full *2009 School Climate and Connectedness Survey Statewide Report*, visit:

<http://www.alaskaice.org/files/2009SCCSStatewideReportNovember16.pdf> or go to the Alaska ICE homepage (www.alaskaice.org) and click the SCCS button on the left side.

Sidebar:

Improvements in 2010 School Climate Survey Include Option of Early Results

This year, AASB is offering a new and improved online School Climate survey. Among the many new features, districts using the online system will have the ability to access student and staff survey completion rates at each participating school in real time through a district "dashboard." Participating districts can also opt to receive early summaries of their district and school results in early May, allowing use of the results this school year. Contact Lori Klein (lklein@asb.org or 586-1083) for details.