

School Climate Strategies and Resources



School climate is a broad, multifaceted concept that involves many aspects of the student’s educational experience.

While the circumstances that lead to violence are complex and far-ranging, research suggests that a positive school climate can lead to a significant decrease in the likelihood of crime, aggression, and violent behavior. Developing students with strong character who are connected to their peers, educators, and communities in meaningful ways can improve school climate, help prevent acts of violence, and lead to improved behavioral and academic outcomes.

School leaders and teachers can make character development a priority by supporting practices in the classroom and school, as well as collaborating with families and community organizations. Schools and districts should also implement social, emotional, and behavioral support systems to create a climate that supports and responds to student behavior. By engaging in a school climate improvement process, education leaders at the state, district, and school levels can increase the safety and success of all members of the school community.

Strategies to Consider



Conduct a school climate survey and collect data: Measuring school climate is critical for improvement because high-quality data allows schools and districts to better understand the perceptions of its students, staff, and parents; monitor progress; make data-driven decisions; involve stakeholders; and adapt to shifting needs related to school climate.



Identify measures and programs that are best suited for your school and implement them: Once schools have identified areas of school climate and conditions for learning that need to be addressed, they must apply their data to make an informed decision about which programmatic interventions should be implemented to improve student outcomes. Implementation involves putting a plan into effect, including the process of monitoring progress, making adjustments, and evaluating impact.



Consider expanding beyond school climate to incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) and provide students access to treatment programs or professionals: Social and emotional learning involves the processes through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. A growing body of research indicates that school-based efforts to promote students’ SEL represent an effective approach to enhance children’s success in school and life.

SchoolSafety.gov Disclaimer

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), U.S. Department of Education (ED), U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) do not endorse any individual, enterprise, product, or service. DHS, ED, DOJ, and HHS do not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described in this communication. DHS, ED, DOJ, and HHS do not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any information outside of those respective Departments, and the opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of DHS, ED, DOJ, and HHS.



Resources

[SchoolSafety.gov](#) offers a variety of resources, programs, and tools that school communities can use to foster a positive school climate, including:

Guides and Reports

- [Creating and Sustaining a Positive and Communal School Climate](#): This report provides four recommendations to parents, administrators, and principals for creating and sustaining a positive and communal school environment.
- [Parent & Educator Guide to School Climate Resources](#): This guide provides parents, teachers, administrators, and other interested parties general information about the concept of school climate improvement, suggestions for leading an effective school climate improvement effort, and additional resources for those interested in more information.

Resources and Tools

- [School Climate Improvement Resource Package](#): This resource package includes a variety of items to meet a range of needs among public schools and districts interested in improving school climate, including a reference manual, action guides, data resources, and online modules.
- [School Climate Surveys](#): These adaptable surveys and associated web-based platform allows states, local districts, and schools to collect and act on reliable, nationally-validated school climate data in real-time.

Strategies and Tips

- [Build a Safe Environment](#): This webpage offers information for schools and teachers on how to create a safe and supportive school climate to help prevent bullying.
- [School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth](#): This webpage contains fact sheets and training materials on strategies for school administrators, teachers, and families on increasing school connectedness – the belief held by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.

Technical Assistance Centers

- [National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments](#): The Center offers information and technical assistance to states, districts, schools, institutions of higher learning, and communities focused on improving school climate and conditions for learning.
- [Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports Technical Assistance Center](#): The Center helps schools, districts, and states build a multi-tiered approach to social, emotional, and behavioral support that can improve school climate, safety, and academic outcomes for students, including students with disabilities and students from underrepresented groups.

Trainings

- [Creating a Safe and Respectful Environment in Our Nation's Classrooms](#): This training is designed to aid classroom teachers, other educators, and support personnel to reduce instances of bullying behavior and to build a supportive classroom climate in which bullying is less likely to occur.
- [Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package](#): This training package offers school and district administrators and staff a framework and roadmap for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach school- or district-wide. It includes a variety of resources for educating school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices and for providing school leaders with a step-by-step process for implementing a universal, trauma-informed approach.

