2023-24

Evaluation of the Culture and Belonging Program: Key Findings

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DALLAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT | Program Evaluation

Website:

In 2023, the Social and Emotional Learning department transformed into the **Culture and Belonging department**, as part of Dallas ISD's Counseling Services. The department's vision is to "promote a district that is safe, supportive, and welcoming where all students and adults experience a sense of belonging." In 2023-24, the Culture and Belonging team provided campuses with opportunities to develop prosocial skills that are related to academic success as well as improving their self-awareness and strengthening their relationship with the community to help promote a sense of safety and belonging for all.

Key Findings

Implementation

- Most campus staff who responded to the implementation survey agreed or strongly agreed (range: 78% to 94% for each survey item) that practices related to cultivating a sense of culture and belonging are occurring on their campus.

Stakeholder Feedback

- Most attendees agreed or strongly agreed that the PD sessions for Culture and Belonging were innovative (89%), relevant (92%), safe (98%), and authentic (96%). The program met its goal of 90% on three of the four survey items and missed its goal by one percentage point on the last survey item.
- Favorable response rates at focused campuses for Campus Climate Survey subscales relevant to Culture and Belonging (i.e., Positive Culture and Environment, Teach-Teacher Trust, and Teacher-Principal Trust) were within three and eight percentage points of the district across elementary, middle, and high schools in 2024.
- Elementary and middle school students at focused campuses tended to have higher rates of positive responses on the Campus Climate Survey than high school students.
- From Fall 2022 to Fall 2023, the number of responses on the Panorama Survey increased by 19 percent for Grades 3-5 and 47 percent for Grades 6-12, which met the program goal.
- The favorable response rate on the self-efficacy subscale for elementary schools that were focused campuses (63%) was the same as the district rate, which met the program goal, and high schools (49%) were within one percentage point of the district rate. However, the rate at middle schools (48%) was lower than the district rate (65%).
- For Grades 3-5, favorable response rates at focused campuses for the school belonging (75%) and school climate (74%) subscales of the School Environment survey were the same as the district rates, which met the program goal.
- For Grades 6-12, the favorable rates at focused campuses for school belonging (43%) and school climate (53%) were lower than the district rates (51% to 63%).
- Favorable response rates on the Student Experience Survey for elementary schools that were focused campuses were the same as the district for rigorous expectations (85%) and teacher-student relationships (85%).

Recommendations

- **Continue providing PD opportunities for campus staff members that are effective at developing prosocial skills.**
  In 2023-24, most PD participants agreed that the sessions related to culture and belonging (e.g., Fostering Student Belonging & Engagement, Culture and Belonging Overview) were innovative, relevant, safe, and authentic. By training campus staff members how to promote student's prosocial skills, students will be more likely to develop skills that are needed to be successful, such as controlling their emotions, understanding others, making positive choices, and being resilient. In addition, program staff members should explore reasons for low ratings of certain training sessions (i.e., Trust-Based Relational Intervention).

- **Continue efforts to increase the response rates on the Panorama survey.**
  Belonging program staff members focused on encouraging more students to complete Panorama Survey, which led to a 19 percent increase in responses for Grades 3-5 and 47 percent increase in Grades 6-12. By continuing to increase response rates, program staff members and district leaders will be able to better track changes in student perceptions over time about whether they feel safe, supported, and welcome on campuses.

Recommendations

- **Identify possible factors impacting the perceptions of middle school and high school students at focused campuses regarding self-efficacy, school environment, and campus climate.**
  Compared to elementary and high school students, middle school students at focused campuses had lower favorability rates on the (a) Panorama Well-Being survey (i.e., Self-Efficacy subscale) and (b) School Environment Survey (i.e., School Belonging and School Climate subscales). In addition, elementary and middle school students at focused campuses tended to have higher rates of positive responses on the Campus Climate Survey than high school students. By better understanding which factors have the most impact on student's sense of belonging, program staff will be able to more effectively provide differentiated support for middle school and high school students so that they can experience a more positive school climate.