

2016-17 Dallas ISD Climate Survey

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At-a-Glance

The Dallas ISD Districtwide Climate Survey was administered to all campus-based professional and support staff during December 2016 and May 2017. The Climate Survey had three purposes:

- To contribute to consistent organizational improvement;
- To gain integral feedback from school based employees;
- To align systems to student outcomes.

While overall results provide a broad picture of district change, the Climate Survey is primarily intended to provide individual campuses with feedback that can identify areas of success as well as opportunities for improvement. After each administration, campus-level results have been distributed to building principals, feeder pattern Executive Directors, and School Leadership management, and used to initiate and guide discussion and planning for improvement among central and campus administrators and staff.

The Climate Survey contributed to the campus principals' Mid-Year Review by providing staff feedback that related directly to principal effectiveness, as well as more complex information that helped to identify underlying issues that may contribute to or hinder success at the campus level.

The 2016-17 school year was the fifth consecutive year in which the Climate Survey was administered. In 2012-13, the survey was conducted internally, by the Department of Evaluation and Assessment (E&A). To provide additional assurance of confidentiality, the survey has been administered by an external organization since 2013-14. In 2016-17, the survey was administered by Hanover Research, an independent education research firm located in Washington, D.C.

Dallas ISD provided Hanover Research with a list of email addresses of all campus-based staff. No employee ID number or staff names were provided. Hanover then sent an email to all staff members, asking each of them to use an individualized link to the survey. Once the survey closed, Hanover provided a file of survey results with employee email addresses removed to Dallas ISD. Survey responses from past administrations also remain confidential, and no individual employee information regarding survey participation or responses has been released.

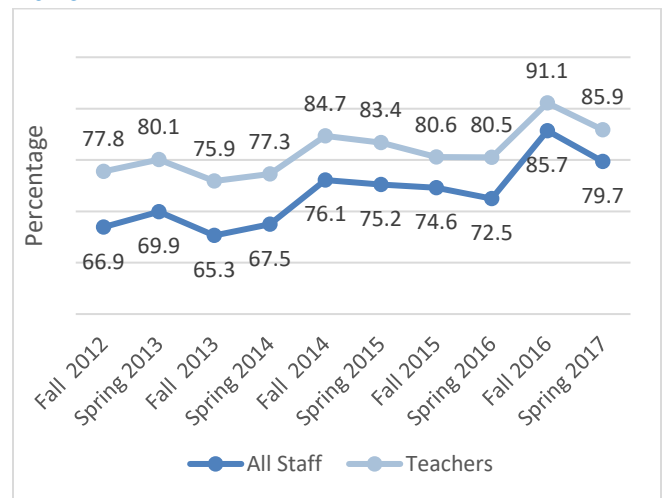
In 2016-17, Hanover also assumed responsibility for providing analyses of survey results. Previously, E&A staff had conducted all analyses, using the raw data file provided by the external survey administrator. Quality control was assured by having both E&A and Hanover

analyze the Fall 2016 data separately, using comparable methods. Results from both sets of analyses were essentially identical, so Hanover took over production of all reports for Spring 2017.

Participation Rate

Participation rates by administration for teachers and for all campus-based staff are shown in Figure 1. Participation was greater in 2016-17 than in the four prior years. By campus, participation rates varied from 39 to 100 percent, with 65 of 230 campuses attaining participation rates of 90 percent or more. By feeder pattern, participation varied from 55 to 92 percent of all staff.

Figure 1: Survey Participation Rates, 2012-13 to 2016-17



Scales

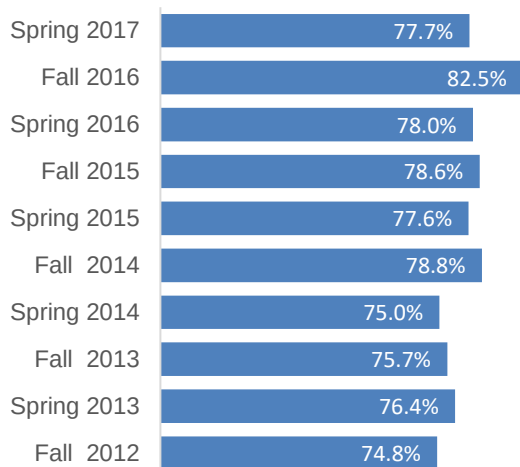
The initial version of the survey, given in the fall of 2012, contained items grouped into three scales, each describing conditions deemed necessary or desirable for an effective school: School's Beliefs and Priorities, Positive Culture and Environment, and Culture of Feedback and Support. An additional scale, College-Going Culture, was added in 2012-13. Survey scale groupings were initially determined through principal components analysis (PCA) of staff responses to individual items. Each year, items have been added to and removed from the survey; the PCA analysis has been repeated following the subsequent administrations, and has consistently indicated the same overall structure. New items are added to scale score calculations after their initial use and validation.

Item responses ranged from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”). Scale scores were computed at the individual level and aggregated to the school level. Scale scores at the individual level consisted of the mean of the item scores on each scale. Percentages of positive (“Agree”/“Strongly agree”) responses were calculated for each item and scale at the campus, feeder pattern, and District levels.

School’s Beliefs and Priorities

Positive responses to items on this scale indicate that the school bases its actions on the District’s Student Achievement Goals, and follows a set of campus Key Actions that are student-focused and understood by school staff. Priorities of school leadership and staff are aligned, staff believe they have support from school leadership, and staff feel that their school is headed in the right direction. The percentage of positive responses across all administrations is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Percentage of Positive Responses, Beliefs and Priorities Scale, 2012-13 to 2016-17



Key results include the following:

- The percentage of positive responses on this scale was greater in Fall 2016 than in prior administrations, but returned to a rate similar to that of earlier years in Spring 2017.
- In Fall 2016 and Spring 2017, approximately 87 to 88 percent of staff agreed or strongly agreed that the Dallas ISD Student Achievement Goals guided actions on their campus. About 91 percent agreed that they understood their roles in implementing key actions.
- About 83 percent in Fall 2016 and 78 percent in Spring 2017 responded that the key actions at their school were focused on what is best for students.
- More than 75 percent responded that they had the support from campus leadership to do their job well.

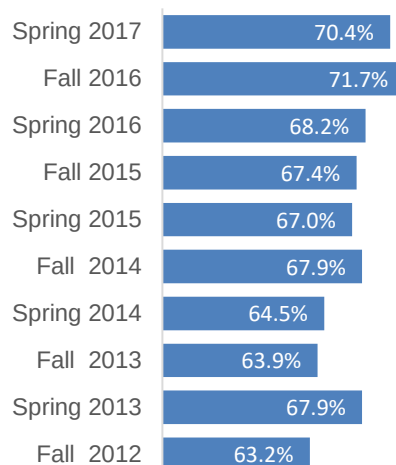
- Approximately 76 percent in Fall 2016 and 74 percent in Spring 2017 responded that their school’s priorities were similar to what they thought they should be, and more than 76 percent in both administrations agreed that their campus was headed in the right direction.

The item “Overall, the district is headed in the right direction” was included in this section of the survey. (This item was not included in the calculation of scale scores, because the scales are designed to reflect perceptions of climate at the campus level.) Responses were 73 percent positive in Fall 2016 and 71 percent positive in Spring 2017, an increase from the percentage of positive responses from the previous year (63 percent Fall 2015, 66 percent Spring 2016). Both 2015-16 and 2016-17 responses were substantially more positive than those in any previous years, which ranged from 44% (Spring 2014) to 52% (Spring 2015).

Culture of Feedback and Support (teachers only)

Positive responses to the items on this scale indicate that effective campus leadership provides support and feedback to teachers that improves job performance; helps teachers to understand recent changes; improves the quality of instruction; and encourages teachers to develop leadership potential. Teachers perceive that professional development and teamwork with colleagues help improve instruction. The percentage of positive responses across all administrations is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Percentage of Positive Responses, Feedback and Support Scale, 2012-13 to 2016-17



Key results include the following:

- Overall responses in 2016-17 were more than 70 percent positive, a larger percentage than in any prior year.
- More than 70 percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that campus leadership helped them

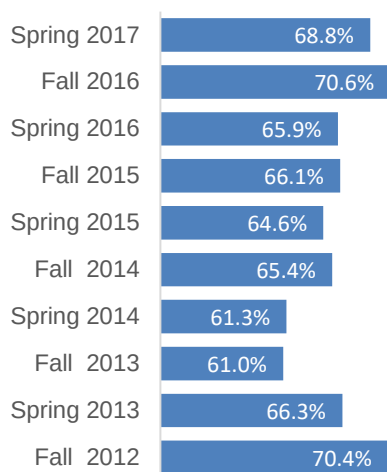
improve the quality of instruction, and that they had opportunities and encouragement to develop leadership potential.

- About 72 percent of teachers in Fall 2016 and 69 percent in Spring 2017 responded that their campus had an effective leadership team.
- More than 75 percent of teachers credited their team experiences in 2016-17 with helping them improve instruction.
- Sixty-four (64) percent of teachers in both Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 agreed that professional development sessions helped them improve instruction.

Positive Culture and Environment

Positive responses to the items on this scale indicate that the school environment is clean and safe, with consistent and effective student discipline. Staff work in an environment of respect, and are satisfied with recognition for doing their jobs well. Staff look forward to their work each day, would recommend the school as a workplace to others, and would stay with Dallas ISD even if offered a comparable job elsewhere. Morale at the school has improved during the year. The percentage of positive responses across all administrations is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Percentage of Positive Responses, Culture and Environment Scale, 2012-13 to 2016-17



Key results include the following:

- Scores in 2016-17 were higher than in any prior administration since Fall 2012. (It should be noted that scale scores for 2012-13 are not directly comparable with subsequent administrations, as three new items were added to the scale score calculations in Fall 2013.)
- Nearly 80 percent of staff agreed in 2016-17 that they looked forward to working each day at their school, and that their campus was clean and safe.
- Nearly three-quarters of staff would recommend the school to others as a workplace, and a similar

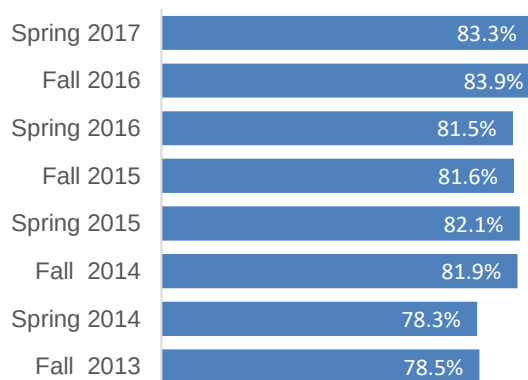
percentage felt that they worked in an environment of support and respect.

- Two items addressing student discipline received responses exceeding 60 percent positive in both fall and spring, compared to percentages below 60 percent in 2015-16 and 2014-15.
- The item "Morale at my school has improved this year" was above 60 percent positive, compared to a low of 40% in Spring 2013, when the item was first used.
- In all administrations before 2015-16, 55 percent or fewer agreed that, if offered a comparable position with similar pay and benefits at another district, they would stay with Dallas ISD. The percentage responding positively increased to 60 percent in Spring 2016 and exceeded that level in 2016-17 (62% Fall, 64% Spring).
- Seventy (70) percent of staff or more agreed that they would recommend their school to parents seeking a place for their child, an increase over the 2015-16 percentages.

College-Going Culture

Positive responses to the items on this scale indicate that teachers focus instruction on preparing their students for college success, and expect most of their students to attend college. They provide feedback and support to prevent students from giving up when challenged, and in turn, expect students to give their full effort. The percentage of positive responses across all administrations is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Percentage of Positive Responses, College Readiness Scale, 2013-14 to 2016-17



Key results include the following:

- Positive response percentages have historically been higher on this scale than on other scales, exceeding 80 percent for all administrations since 2013-14. As with the other scales, 2016-17 responses were more positive than those in prior years.
- Response rates by item ranged from 80 to 88 percent positive. Items receiving the most positive responses were "Teachers at this school give

students feedback to help them understand how to improve,” and “Teachers at this school feel that it is a part of their job to prepare students to succeed in college.”

- As in previous years, responses of elementary school staff were slightly less positive than those of secondary staff.

Survey Revisions

Four new sets of teacher-only items were introduced in 2016-17: Collective Responsibility, Reflective Dialogue, Teacher-Principal Trust, and Teacher-Teacher Trust. The selected item sets were previously validated by the Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago.

The new items were added as part of a review process conducted in collaboration with School Leadership to ensure that Climate Survey data remain relevant, informative, and actionable. Other items were updated, reworded, or removed if they were no longer relevant to district goals, or if results were not providing new and useful information. Input from feeder pattern Executive Directors, campus principals, and teachers was sought before making the final determination as to which items would be added or removed.

PCA analyses of these item sets will be used to validate their scale structures. New scale score calculations and comparisons with 2016-17 results will be added to campus-level reports for the 2017-18 school year.

Collective Responsibility

Responses indicate what proportion of teachers take responsibility for improving the school, and work together to reach school goals. They indicate how many help maintain discipline throughout the school, not just in their classrooms, and feel responsible for helping students develop self-control. They also indicate how many teachers help each other do their best, feel responsible when students fail, and feel responsible for making sure that all students learn. The percentage of teachers who answered “Most” or “Nearly all” to these items ranged from 67 to 81 percent. Other possible responses were “About half,” “Some,” or “None.”

Reflective Dialogue

Responses indicate how often during the current school year teachers have had discussions with their colleagues about what helps students learn the best; development of curriculum and instruction; school goals; managing classroom behavior; and partnering with parents to promote students’ learning. The percentage of teachers who said they discussed each topic “Almost daily” or “One or two times a week” ranged from 55 percent (partnering with families) to 86 percent (what helps students learn).

Teacher-Teacher Trust

Positive responses to these items indicate that teachers in the school trust one another, and can discuss feelings, worries and frustrations among themselves. Teachers respect other teachers who take the lead in efforts to improve the school, and those who are experts at their craft. The percentage of positive responses to these items ranged from 69 to 84 percent.

Teacher-Principal Trust

Positive responses to these items indicate that teachers in the school trust the principal’s word, and can discuss feelings, worries, and frustrations with the principal. The principal has confidence in teachers’ expertise, takes a personal interest in their professional development, and looks out for the personal welfare of his or her faculty. The principal is an effective manager who makes the school run smoothly, and places the needs of children ahead of personal or political interests. The percentage of positive responses ranged from 69 to 80 percent.

Recommendations

- **The Districtwide Climate Survey should continue to be administered for the foreseeable future.** The survey has provided useful and actionable information to School Leadership since its introduction, and should continue to be administered twice a year. Results should be presented as an opportunity to identify areas in need of improvement as well as areas of excellence. Ongoing efforts should focus on obtaining honest responses from staff without penalties for the school or fear of reprisal.
- **School Leadership should continue annual review of survey items.** School Leadership should review the survey annually to ensure that all items are up-to-date with current district initiatives and practices, and are providing actionable information to campuses and feeder patterns.

An electronic version of this report can be found at www.dallasisd.org/Page/888. For more information, please contact Program Evaluation at evaluation@dallasisd.org.

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