



## *Great Public Schools for Every Student*

### **School Connectedness**

Educator demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between school connectedness and school climate and the role they play in creating a positive learning and teaching environment.

#### **Key Method**

The educator researches and investigates the components necessary to establish a positive school environment through the development of a campus-wide connected community.

#### **Method Components**

One factor that has a significant impact on school success and reduction in risk-taking behaviors, including involvement in bullying behaviors, is school connectedness. In other words, the more students feel connected to school staff, the less likely they are to engage in risk-taking behavior, including bullying.

#### **Seven Factors of School Connectedness**

There are seven factors associated with school connectedness; i.e. the feeling students have that they are a part of their school community:

1. A sense of belonging
2. Liking school
3. A good circle of friends
4. Engagement in academic programs
5. Discipline that is fair and effective
6. Participation in extracurricular activities
7. Supportive and caring school staff.

Of these seven factors, educators have the most direct control over the last one—being supportive and caring. By being supportive and caring adults in our schools and communities, educators can make a significant difference in students' lives and behavior.

Researchers and practitioners have consistently found that students' ability to form strong, close bonds with school personnel is associated with higher academic achievement, better social-emotional functioning, and less involvement in delinquent behaviors.

It's important to start talking about how educators can improve school climate and school connectedness when considering the implementation of strategies that can reduce bullying, sexual harassment, and other forms of peer victimization in our schools.

## Suggestions for establishing a positive school culture and a sense of school connectedness.

Become familiar with the role of each of the nine Educational Support Professional (ESP) job categories, using the NEA ESP perspectives.

Watch the video *A Day Without an ESP*.

Become familiar with the "Aspects of School Climate" by reading "What is School Climate" in the NEA research brief entitled *Importance of School Climate*.

Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from your perspective.

Read "How is School Climate Measured" in the NEA research brief entitled *Importance of School Climate*.

Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from the students' perspective.

Read "What is School Improve Climate" in the NEA research brief entitled *Importance of School Climate*.

## Supporting Research

Cornell, Dewey, and Limber, Susan P. (2015). "Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school." *American Psychologist* 70.4: 333–43. Web.

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/amp-a0038558.pdf>

O'Brennan, L., Bradshaw, C., and Johns Hopkins Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence. *The Importance of School Climate*. Rep. Comp. National Education Association. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

[http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15584\\_Bully\\_Free\\_Research\\_Brief-4pg.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15584_Bully_Free_Research_Brief-4pg.pdf)

Rigby, K., and Slee, P. T. (2008). Interventions to reduce bullying. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 20, 165–83

[http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/Bullying\\_Prevention\\_Strategies\\_in\\_Schools\\_Ken\\_Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/Bullying_Prevention_Strategies_in_Schools_Ken_Rigby.pdf)

"U.S. Department of Education Provides Guidance to Help Classroom Teachers Combat Bullying." U.S. Department of Education. N.p., 28 Sept. 2012. Web. 13 July 2017.

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-provides-guidance-help-classroom-teachers-combat-bullying>.

DeSouza, Eros R., and Ribeiro, J'Aims. (2005). "Bullying and Sexual Harassment Among Brazilian High School Students." *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 20.9: 1018–038. Web.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7693543\\_Bullying\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Harassment\\_Among\\_Brazilian\\_High\\_School\\_Students](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7693543_Bullying_and_Sexual_Harassment_Among_Brazilian_High_School_Students)

## Resources

National School Climate Center

<http://www.schoolclimate.org>

National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments' School Climate Survey Compendium

<http://www.safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/school-climate-measurement>

The Importance of School Climate. Rep. Comp. National Education Association. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print

[http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15584\\_Bully\\_Free\\_Research\\_Brief-4pg.pdf](http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/15584_Bully_Free_Research_Brief-4pg.pdf)

Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate & Discipline

<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/index.html>

GLSEN Local School Climate Survey

[Localsurvey.glsen.org](http://Localsurvey.glsen.org)

A Day Without Education Support Professionals (ESP)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdvqQ39uSZs>

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a “passing” for Parts 1 and 3 (Overview Questions & Reflection) and a “Proficient” evaluation for each artifact in Part 2 (Work Examples / Artifacts).

### Part 1. Overview Questions

750 word limit

After reading the nine perspectives, seek out five individuals from different areas and discuss with them how they see their role in helping to create a positive school environment. In outline form, document the five different responses, providing at least three different ideas from each participant.

- **Passing:** Five different Educational Support Professionals (ESPs), (Bus Driver, Paraprofessional, Secretary, Cafeteria Worker, Custodian, etc) are interviewed, and for each provide three or more ideas regarding their contributions to a positive school climate.

### Part 2. Work Examples / Artifacts

To earn this micro-credential, you must submit each of the following 3 artifacts:

#### 1. Aspects of School Climate, Part 1

(500-word limit)

Using the “Aspects of School Climate” chart from the *What is School Climate* report in the resource section above, rate your school for each of the following categories on a scale of 1–5 (1 is a low rating and 5 is high) and provide evidence.

- Relationships
- Respect for diversity
- School participation
- Emotional safety
- Physical safety
- Substance use
- Physical environment
- Academic environment
- Wellness
- Disciplinary environment

#### 2. School Climate Survey

(500-word limit)

After reviewing “How School Climate is Measured” on the NEA *What is School Climate* report in the resource section above, use the GLSEN survey tool to create and administer a climate survey to your class(es), then evaluate their responses.

#### 3. Aspects of School Climate, Part 2

(500-word limit)

Go back to the “Aspects of School Climate” chart and rate the categories on the same 1–5 scale, this time using your evidence from your students’ perceptions.

null	Proficient	Basic	Developing
School Rating, Part 1	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for each of the 10 categories.	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for fewer than 10 categories.	None of the 10 subcategories are rated, and no specific examples are provided for any of the 10 categories.
School Climate Survey	Climate survey has 45 to 70 questions, with all 10 subcategories rated.	Climate survey has 20 to 45 questions, with 5 to 8 subcategories rated.	Climate survey has 20 or fewer questions, with 1 to 5 subcategories rated.
School Rating, Part 2	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for each of the 10 categories.	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for fewer than 10 categories.	None of the 10 subcategories are rated, and no specific examples are provided for any of the 10 categories.

## Reflection 1

500 word limit

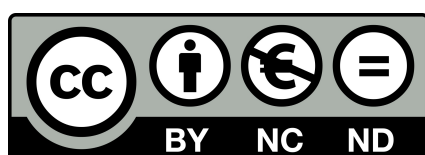
How did your students’ perspectives change your thinking about your current school culture?

- **Passing:** Reflection shows evidence of shifts in students’ perspectives and cites specific examples from student surveys

500 word limit

Reflect on your investigation of school connectedness. Describe at least five changes that can be made on your campus to help promote a positive school climate. Be specific in your rationale.

- **Passing:** Reflection includes at least five specific examples citing specific reasons gleaned from working on this competency.



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