



# School Connectedness

## Competency

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



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Of these seven factors, educators have the most direct control over the last one—being supportive and caring. By being supportive, caring, and inclusive 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 Bullying Perspective Research article.
- 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 Bully Free Schools Summit Book.
- Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from your perspective.
- Read "How is School Climate Measured" in the NEA Bully Free Schools Summit Book.
- Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from the students' perspective.
- Read "How Do We Improve School Climate?" in the NEA Bully Free Schools Summit Book.

## Supporting Rationale and 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>.

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)



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# Resources

[Facing Hate and Bias at School Pledge](#)

[Components of a Positive School Climate](#)

[BullyFree School Climate Summit Book.pdf](#)

[Step-by-Step Help sheet for GLSEN tool](#)

[Recognizing the First Signs of Bullying | NEA](#)

[How To Be an Advocate for Bullied Students | NEA](#)

[National School Climate Center](#)

[School Climate Survey Compendium | National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments \(NCSSE\)](#)

[Guiding Principles A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline \(PDF\)](#)

[School Climate & Culture](#)

[A Day Without Educational Professionals](#)

[How to Promote Awareness for Diversity in Schools](#)

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## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

*To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient for all components in Part 2.*

### Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(400-500 words)

*Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.*

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*



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1. What background information is important to know to understand the context of your school? Consider things such as population, demographics, and any relevant cultural information, and special considerations regarding student characteristics. Be mindful not to reveal anything confidential.
2. After reading at least 3 of the articles listed in the resource section, or 2 articles and the video listed in the resource section: “A Day Without Educational Professionals” discuss the role of the school in providing a positive climate as it relates to bullying. Describe the role of educational professionals within the school setting and the impact they have on student behavior as it relates to bullying. Overall, what can schools do to head off bullying behaviors?

**Passing:** Response includes all requested parts of the question. Writing is clear and easy to understand

## Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credentials please submit the following **four** artifacts as evidence of your learning. For artifacts the preferred file format is PDF.

*\*Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

### **Artifact 1-Aspects of School Climate**

100 -200 words

Using the “Aspects of School Climate Chart” 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

### **Artifact 2-School Climate Survey**

200 - 300 words

After reviewing “How School Climate is Measured” section in the NEA Bully Free School Climate Summit Book in the resource section above, administer a climate survey to your students, then evaluate their responses. High school level students



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could use the GLSEN tool.

Provide a link or document that includes the questions asked in the survey. Submit a reflection about the process of creating this survey with your audience in mind. You may include information about age, grades, and/or language and reading levels of those taking the survey and how each question relates to a category of climate.

**Artifact 3: Three Completed Student Surveys**

**Artifact 4 - Analysis**

250-350 words

Compare and contrast your perceptions of the school with those of the students. Utilize and give examples from the survey responses. Respond to the following:

- What is similar in your and your students' perspectives?
- What is different in your and your students' perspectives?
- What are some current school policies and initiatives that might have contributed to these survey results?

Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Aspects of School Climate Part 1</b>	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.
<b>Artifact 2: School Climate Survey</b>	Climate survey is appropriate length and style for your students. Reflection on the process is thorough.	Climate survey or reflection on process is unclear.	Climate survey and reflection are missing.
<b>Artifact 3: Three Completed Survey</b>	All three student surveys are submitted.	Some student surveys are submitted.	No student surveys are submitted.
<b>Artifact 4: Analysis</b>	Analysis is thorough. Writing is clear and easy to understand.	Analysis is not thorough or writing isn't clear.	Analysis is missing.



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## Part 3 Reflection

(400-500 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

*Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. Reflect on your investigation of school connectedness. Describe 5 changes that can be made on your campus to help promote a more positive school climate. Be specific in your rationale, connecting it to the research and the survey results and/or analysis.
2. How did your students' perspectives change your thinking about your current school culture?
3. What actions can you now take to contribute to a more positive school climate?

**Passing:** Reflection shows evidence of shifts in thinking due to students' perspectives and cites specific examples from student surveys. Educator self-reflects on steps that can be personally taken now to contribute to a more positive school culture.



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