# Best Practices to Improve School Climate Guide

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. The Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act supports the establishment of strategies for creating a positive school climate to prevent and reduce bullying and harassment. Growing national research and evidence confirm that school climate improvement is the optimal foundation for the prevention of bullying and harassment-related behaviors and is the most effective basis from which to foster student engagement and learning.

An effective school climate improvement process is an intentional, strategic, data-driven, fundamentally collaborative and continuous process. The process has five stages which are preparation, assessment, planning for improvement, implementation and evaluation. Assessing a school's climate is an important part of this. To assess school climate, schools look at four broad categories or domains of school climate which are school safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships and the environment.

This resource was created to spark valuable dialogue around the best next steps schools can take when addressing a particular area of need represented by the community. The best practices outlined in this tool will be most helpful during the planning for improvement stage once a school has completed a thorough school climate assessment. Taking time to develop an effective planning process and intentionally considering how to ignite the intrinsic motivation of students, parents/guardians and fellow school personnel throughout the process will ensure the greatest success for these best practices over the long term.

Practices listed in this tool are aligned with the four broad categories or domains of school climate which are school safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships and the environment. For each practice listed, you will find a brief description of the practice, an overview of the ideal stakeholders to involve for success and a link to specific resources or tools related to the practice to help you move forward with action planning. Although a specific practice is primarily listed in one of the four domains, it is possible for that practice to affect one or more of the other domains due to its focus or potential influence. For example, many safety-related practices can directly influence factors in the teaching and learning domain or the interpersonal relationships domain, depending how the practice is implemented. In addition, some of the domains overlap conceptually and some practices easily fit into multiple categories given how the educators describe their impact. To aid your understanding of this overlap, the fifth column in each section highlights the impact a practice can have on other domains.

We classify the practices to help school teams prioritize next steps based on the effort they can commit and the level of impact each practice will have on the community. The three classifications are:

**Short-Term Practice** – These practices are easiest and quickest in resolving a need and will have low impact. These can be considered a low-hanging fruit. These can be effectively used in a "small wins" strategy where quickly identifying and improving a situation can provide momentum for larger change. These are highlighted in yellow.

**Medium-Term Practice** – These are practices that you believe will take reasonable effort to coordinate and will have a meaningful impact. These issues rise up to the top as strong medium-term efforts. These are highlighted in green.

**Long-Term Practice** – These practices have a large impact but require much more effort to accomplish. These are your long-term projects that require extensive planning and development. These are highlighted in orange.

As you develop your action plan, it is most effective to consider a range of short-term/low-impact, medium-term/meaningful-impact and long-term/large-impact practices. For example, using a short-term practice early on to address a need sends a positive message to the community and demonstrates that you're making headway. Intersperse these practices between medium-term or longer-term projects to ensure your improvement efforts have appropriate levels of commitment and impact to sustain gains. It is important to consider how new efforts can be integrated with any existing strong efforts in the school and to limit the total number of new practices to only those your team can effectively complete in the time frame allotted. Most schools will only implement one to three practices in a given year based on their action plan and needs. Schools are most successful when they start small to build the momentum for school climate improvement. Remember that it is essential to celebrate successes as you move forward and engage the wider community in the process throughout.

*Note: These best practices do not represent a list of all possible next steps or practices. Rather, they are useful prompts for generating ideas that will support your improvement efforts. Use the prioritizing classifications to gauge any new suggestions your team raises through the action planning process.*

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# Practices to Improve School Climate Dimensions Related to School Safety

| Practice | How it Works | Key Stakeholders to Involve | Tools or Resources | Other Domains Impacted by Practice |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **"Hot Spots" Map** | "Hot Spots" maps can illuminate unsafe areas across campus and highlight the times of day when students say they feel the least safe. Students will place a sticker on a pre-printed map to indicate problem areas. | Engage students via counselors or focus group meetings to share their perspective on hot spots across the school. This is a great way to promote student voice. | Hot Spots Map Protocol | **Interpersonal Relationships:** It Creates opportunities for staff to connect with students on safety issues.<br><br>**Environment:** Provides deeper understanding of the school campus. |
| **Stressful Incidents Inventory** | Use an inventory of stressful or painful school events, experiences and situations that can compromise safety to help school staff understand the particular context issues driving this area of need for students. | Representatives from all members of the school community including school leaders, parents, students and staff. | Stressful Incident Tool | |

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| **Promote Parental Involvement** | Use mini-presentations at parent-teacher meetings early in the school year to promote parental involvement. It will be of great benefit to welcome and promote parent voice in trying to establish a school's norms and values. This work will also encourage school leadership and staff to become aware of cultural nuances of which they might not have known about. | Engage parents at parent-teacher events. It is also important to make all materials and resources available online (via videos and worksheets, etc….) to encourage deeper participation by parents. | Ten Steps for Effective Communication with Families<br><br>How to Handle Bullying - Tips for Parents<br><br>Why Hitting Back Isn't Always The Best Option | **Environment:** This creates a more welcoming environment, where parents feel they belong and that they are valued.<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** It encourages deeper engagement and understanding of the significance of this work within the larger school agenda. |
| **Personal Commitments to Improving School Climate** | Encourage all staff – especially instructional staff – to create (in writing) and reflect upon personal commitments to the work of school climate improvement. This will promote a sense of accountability to each other and to the students. | Engage all staff in this practice during grade level meetings, departmental reunions, and professional learning community work groups or through an all-staff exercise. | My Personal School Climate Commitments<br><br>School Climate Improvement Individual and Group Worksheet | **Interpersonal Relationships:** It solidifies personal connection to the work, helps define "buy-in" and motivation across groups.<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:** It clearly defines how this work can be accomplished across all levels and groups. |

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| **Creation of Classroom Norms and Guidelines with Students** | When students are engaged in the creation of how a class is managed, acting out and misbehavior will likely dissipate. | Classroom teachers should engage their entire class in this exercise. | Making Social Contracts With Students | **Interpersonal Relationships:** Students are more invested in norms when they co-create them and feel more engaged when their voices are heard.<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:** This can be a valuable learning opportunity, and build more engagement in the classroom. |
| **Ensure "Buy-In" from School Staff Early in the School Year** | To address potential resistance of adults in promoting all facets of school safety, it is beneficial to initially assess areas of potential discomfort. | Engage all staff. This is most effective in all-staff meetings at the start of the school year, so that all school personnel (i.e. not just teachers) are adequately included and their voices are heard. | Comfort, Risk, Danger Zones Protocol | **Teaching and Learning:** This builds the capacity of staff to be responsive to student needs. |

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| **Ongoing Discipline Policy Review** | Annual discipline policy review is required by Minnesota Statutes, section 121A.65. This exercise seeks to create alignment of multiple policies that impact school climate. Using discipline data to direct stakeholders to sections of discipline policies that are relied on most heavily or potentially overused gives an idea of where to start. Aligning policy purposes to district vision statements is another exercise in ensuring that policies are appropriate. Holding focus groups with teachers, principals, parents and/or student groups allows for identification of pain points for each stakeholder group. Developing MOUs with school resource officers based on best practices and reflecting those responsibilities in district policy is another step districts can take. | Seek input and participation from school district level staff as well as students (age appropriate) and parents to ensure all voices are being heard. | Democratic Discipline Guiding Principles<br><br>Student-Centered Discipline Principles and Practice<br><br>Best Practices for School Policing (NASRO) | **Interpersonal Relationships:** It creates an important dialogue and opportunity for consensus-building across stakeholder groups and engenders strong personal connections between populations. |

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| **Create a Student-Centered Alliance at Your School** | Promoting student voice and student engagement is essential for effective school climate improvement efforts. When students are given the opportunity to be heard and to participate in school-wide initiatives, there is a greater likelihood for successful efforts. | Seek out dedicated faculty who are already promoting student engagement and voice. It is essential to get a wide array of students involved. | Upstanders In Action Toolkit<br><br>Educator Toolkits by Grade Level<br><br>NASET Standards for Youth Leadership<br><br>Minnesota School Pride GSA Network<br><br>PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center | **Environment:** Increasing student participation in extracurricular and extended learning activities improves student connectedness and engagement in school. |
| **Morning Meetings with Students** | Implementing morning meetings can foster stronger relationships between students and adults and the meetings happen on a schedule pre-determined by administration and staff. These are 10-15 minute check-ins to support student needs across the school year. | Identify core instructional staff to engage with students on a regular basis through a defined schedule. | Student Relationship Strategies Template | **Interpersonal Relationships:** It provides opportunity for staff to connect with students beyond the classroom and academics.<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:** It builds a strong foundation for learning to take place and provides a space to address barriers to learning. |

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| **Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Professional Development for Instructional Staff** | To better emphasize that SEL development of students is everyone's task regardless of the subject area they teach, offer targeted professional development to all faculty members on essential practices the school community wants to foster. | It is important to have all grade level staff (in Elementary Schools) and content area staff (in secondary schools) involved. | C.H.O.I.C.E. S. Worksheet for Classroom Management<br><br>PBIS MN – Coaching Resources<br><br>Cyberbullying Research Center's Digital Citizenship Activities for Educators | **Teaching and Learning:** It infuses SEL into curriculum seamlessly to support better student engagement and classroom behavior. |
| **Analyze Student Performance Data to Develop Specific Learning Targets** | Faculty should develop systems and processes for analyzing student academic performance data on an ongoing basis.<br><br>Educators should set outcome goals for each student/cluster of students who are below, at and above target objective level.<br><br>Performance data should include both academic and non-academic indicators of student success.<br><br>During PLC time, potentially restructure format of the meeting to accommodate this task. | School support staff, classroom teachers, administrators, non-licensed classroom staff | All Things PLC<br><br>Edutopia: Free Resources and Tools for "Authentic" Assessment<br><br>Massachusetts Addresses Nonacademic Barriers to Learning | **Safety:** Ensure "buy-in" from School Staff early in year.<br><br>**Safety:** Encourage the establishment of "personal commitments" to the work of school climate improvement |

# Practices to Improve School Climate Dimensions Related to Teaching and Learning

| Practice | How it Works | Key Stakeholders to Involve | Tools or Resources | Other Domains Impacted by Practice |
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| **Support Teachers in Continuing Their Education** | Include teachers in decisions about professional development and use a range of techniques (mentoring, peer observation, collaborative work groups). | Faculty should engage one another in discussing and developing strategies that promote individual and collective professional development and ensure that all educator voices are heard. | Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development<br><br>Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement<br><br>Education Resources Information Center<br><br>Learning Forward - Professional Learning for Student Results<br><br>Promising Practices Network: Programs that Work<br><br>What Works Clearinghouse – Institute of Education Sciences | **Safety:**<br><br>• Improving staff's SEL competency improves student safety.<br>• Gaining "buy-in" from school staff early in year ensures support and implementation.<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:**<br><br>• Promote a better understanding (and respect) for diversity embedded in existing professional development opportunities and allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students.<br>• Ensure that administration creates and communicates a clear school climate vision, and is accessible to and supportive of school staff and staff development.<br>• Build positive attitudes and relationships among school staff that support effectively working and learning together |

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| **School Staff Build Their Capacity to Use Differentiated Learning Styles in Their Classrooms, and Receive Coaching to Support the Effort** | Differentiated instruction is a method of designing and delivering instruction to best reach each student.<br><br>Teachers, schools and programs that provide blends of whole group, small group, and independent activities in lessons. | Classroom teachers, lead building staff | The Teacher Toolkit: Checks for Understanding<br><br>Concordia University Examples of Differentiated Instruction<br><br>Universal Design of Instruction: Checklist and Resources<br><br>Personalize Learning Toolkit<br><br>Getting Started with Personalized Learning: Resources for Education Leaders, Teachers and Policymakers<br><br>Louisiana Relying on Teacher-to-Teacher Professional Development to Change Instruction | **Safety:** Ensure "buy-in" from School Staff early in year. |

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| **Adult Role Modeling for Students** | Adults are living examples. Focusing on our own behaviors as parents and educators allows us to be more intentional about what lessons we are teaching our children and how. Students view us as role models. | It involves faculty and as awareness grows about intentional role modeling, school staff should broaden it to parents and community members. | National School Climate Center's Adult Social Emotional and Civic Learning Protocol | **Relationships:** Being more intentional about your actions and the effect it has on others will support greater engagement between stakeholders over time. |

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| **Moral Dilemma Discussions** | Moral Dilemma Discussions are a powerful way to intentionally promote a moral compass for K-12 students. Integrating Moral Dilemma Discussions into academic instruction of language arts, social studies, and history fosters appreciation that moral decisions are often complicated. It underscores the great value in struggling to understand "what is the right thing to do?" | Teaching staff are especially key leaders in this work, but all staff can play a role in making this a continuous part of school life. | Leading Values And Moral Dilemma Discussions | **Safety:** This practice creates an environment where students feel safe unpacking difficult situations. It ensures greater sense of inclusion and safety for all. |

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| **Evaluate Barriers (Possible barriers can be budget, physical space, state and federal education requirements and testing and how those barriers affect teaching and learning.)** | Schools might have latitude in changing some of these factors. What actions can be taken to mitigate the impact of existing constraints? Consider student/teacher ratios, classroom space, required curriculum, mandated testing and professional contracts. | School boards, school administration such as principals and department chairs. | Government Finance Officers Association: Best Practices in School District Budgeting<br><br>Smart School Budgeting: Resources for Districts – Rennie Center | **Environment:** Partner with community groups that can support extra-curricular activities, extended learning, and enrichment programs to build student engagement. |

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| **Ensure That All School Personnel Provide Space and Opportunities for All Students to Participate in Classroom Discussions** | All school personnel provide space and opportunities to ensure parity in student voice, consider question and answer strategies that "randomize" student response – i.e. equitable response opportunities (cold calling, wait time, and choral response). | Faculty should engage one another in discussing and developing strategies that promote (equitable opportunities for students to respond in class where?) equitable response opportunities for students. | [Teach Like A Champion Field Guide (Online Version)](#) | **Safety:**<br><br>• Ensure "buy-in" from school staff early in year.<br>• Encourage the establishment of "personal commitments" to the work of school climate.<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students |

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| **Design Classroom Activities Around Individual, Small Group and Whole Group Instruction** | Designing classroom activities around individual, small and whole group instruction allows for a diversity of learning environments and experiences for students.<br><br>Develop differentiated lessons based on the individual needs of students/cohorts of students. Develop lessons that are differentiated by process, content, and/or product. Student groupings can be homogenous and/or heterogeneous depending on purpose. | Educators, individually and collectively, should develop learning activities that provide students with opportunities to process learning, independently, and then to talk with one another to further inform that learning. | Center for Educational Improvement: Differentiated Instruction Checklist<br><br>Edutopia: Student Learning Groups - Homogeneous or Heterogeneous?<br><br>TeachHub.com: Flexible Grouping as a Differentiated Instruction Strategy<br><br>TeachHub.com: Implementing Differentiated Instruction Strategies | **Safety:**<br><br>• Ensure "buy-in" from school staff early in year<br>• Encourage establishing "personal commitments" to the work of school climate improvement.<br>• Allow Students to participate in the creation of classroom norms and guidelines.<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students |

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| **Build Awareness of Student Culture and Background** | Welcoming parent and student voice in understanding the background of individual learners will be of great benefit to faculty. This work will encourage school faculty to become aware of cultural nuances they may not have initially known about.<br><br>Administrators can provide faculty with opportunities for additional training.<br><br>Students should be provided with opportunities to add their own voices to help develop teacher awareness.<br><br>This will further help teachers to manage their classrooms in a prosocial manner. | Families and faculty should collaborative fully in this regard. | Build Initiative: Pathways to Cultural Competence<br><br>New York University: Culturally Responsive Classroom Management Strategies<br><br>Teaching Tolerance: Critical Practices for Anti-Bias Education | **Safety:**<br><br>• Promote parental involvement early in the year through mini presentations at parent-teacher meetings<br>• Encourage the establishment of "personal commitments" to school climate improvement<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:**<br><br>• Promote a better understanding (and respect) for diversity embedded in exiting PD.<br>• Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students.<br><br>**Environment:**<br><br>• Partner with community groups that can support extra-curricular activities, extended learning, and enrichment programs.<br>• Promote a greater understanding of youth-adult partnerships and its role in creating a healthy school climate. |

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| **Create SEL-Infused Lesson Plans and School-wide Programs.** | 21st Century Learning requires students to collaborate to solve problems that call for contributions of stakeholders with differing viewpoints. Infusing SEL in school fosters collaboration. Invite students to talk with each other and teachers/adults on creating positive classrooms that embrace collegiality, conflict resolution and shared visioning. Encourage faculty to develop field trips, service-learning projects and links with the community and interdisciplinary units. Make explicitly practical classes available to students (managing money, relationship skills, resume-writing, etc.) | Teachers and other adults in the school setting, parents and community stakeholders, and students. | 2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs – Middle and High School Edition<br><br>Character.org: Character Lesson Plans<br><br>Facing History: Resource Collection | **Safety:**<br><br>• SEL Professional Development for Instructional Staff<br>• Encourage the establishment of "personal commitments" to the work of school climate improvement<br>• Allow Students to participate in the creation of classroom norms and guidelines<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students<br><br>**Environment:**<br><br>• Offer incentives for involvement in extracurricular and extended learning activities<br>• Partner with community groups that can support extra-curricular activities, extended learning, and enrichment programs |

# Practices to Improve School Climate Dimensions Related to Interpersonal Relationships

| Practice | How it Works | Key Stakeholders to Involve | Tools or Resources | Other Domains Impacted by Practice |
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| **Promote a Better Understanding and Respect for Diversity Embedded in Existing Professional Development Opportunities** | Providing regularly scheduled workshops, activities, discussion groups and trainings for all adult members of a school community will promote a "united" effort for all in seeing that inclusion and diversity are norms that need to be embraced and practiced over and over again. | It is very important for all voices of the adults in a school community – not just the instructional staff – take part in these activities. | Cultural Competency: The Ohio Project<br><br>Low Pressure Practice on Greetings/Cultural Differences<br><br>Promoting Educators Cultural Competence: NEA Policy Brief and Resources<br><br>PACER – Working with Culturally Diverse Families | **Safety:** SEL professional development for instructional staff, and ensures "buy-in" from school staff early in year<br>**Interpersonal Relationships:**<br>• Promotes a better understanding (and respect) for diversity embedded in existing PD opportunities, and allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students<br>• Ensure that administration creates and communicates a clear vision, and is accessible to and supportive of school staff and staff development<br>**Teaching and Learning:**<br><br>• Support teachers continuing their education through professional development and other opportunities<br>• Provide opportunities for staff to connect with student culture and background |

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| **Teachers Identify and Share Best Practices for Engaging with Students** | Rather than bringing in outside "experts" to share successful ways to engage students, teachers and school staff members speak with each other from their own experiences of successful efforts to promote student voice, participation and engagement. | These conversations should include classroom teachers, social workers, administrators, special education, and other staff who can come together on a regular basis to discuss how students are doing academically and socially. This can work on a school-wide basis or on a grade level basis for elementary schools. | [Institute for Youth Success: Education Northwest](#)<br><br>[Preparing for Cultural Diversity: Resources for Teachers](#)<br><br>[Reflections from Teachers of Culturally Diverse Children: National Association for the Education of Young Children](#) | **Teaching and Learning:**<br>• Ensure that all faculty provide for parity of student voice.<br>• Support teachers in continuing their education through professional development and other opportunities<br>• Provide opportunities for educators to develop awareness of student culture and background<br>• Creating SEL-infused lesson plans and school wide programs<br><br>**Environment:**<br><br>• Promote a greater understanding of youth-adult partnerships and its role in creating a healthy school climate environment<br>• Partner with community groups that can support extra-curricular activities, extended learning and enrichment programs |

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| **Student Leadership Group Creates Protocols and Procedures for Welcoming New Students** | This student-led effort will be effective in creating strong student buy-in and ownership. This promotes student-led initiatives where we get to "share the involvement" with our students. | It's very important for this to be student led, supported by an adult advisor. Many of the strategies suggested in the following links can be adapted so that they are student led. | Does Your School's Atmosphere Shout "Welcome?" — Education World<br><br>Make New Students Feel Welcome in Your Classroom — Scholastic<br><br>New Kids on the Block: Welcoming New Students — Scholastic<br><br>Welcoming New Students to the Building — Education World | **Safety:**<br><br>• Create a student-centered alliance at your school<br>• Allow Students to participate in the creation of classroom norms and guidelines<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:** Creating SEL Infused lesson plans and school wide programs |

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| **Administration Creates and Communicates a Clear School Climate Vision and Is Accessible To, And Supportive Of School Staff and Their Professional Development** | When administration communicates a clear vision, is accessible to and supportive of school staff and staff development, instructional staff are better able to make decisions that align to short-and long-term goals and measurable action planning. Staff development opportunities should also be aligned to the mission of the school. | Administration and faculty. | Achieving Education Excellence for All: A Guide to Diversity-Related Policy Strategies<br><br>ASCD – Developing a Vision and Mission<br><br>Community Story-Mapping Guide (IEL)<br><br>National Association of Elementary School Principals – Resource Center<br><br>National Association of Secondary School Principals<br><br>The School Superintendents Association (AASA) – Portrait of a Graduate | **School Safety:**<br><br>• SEL professional development for instructional staff<br>• School Safety: Encourage the establishment of "personal commitments" to the work of school climate improvement<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:**<br><br>• Support teachers in continuing their education through professional development and other opportunities<br>• Provide opportunities for educators to develop awareness of student culture and background<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** Promote a better understanding (and respect) for diversity embedded in existing professional development opportunities |

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| **Build Positive Attitudes and Relationships Among School Staff** | Building positive attitudes and relationships among school staff creates the atmosphere of trust and empathy that is necessary for fostering equitable and collaborative decision-making. This supports effectively working and learning together. | Administration and faculty | All Things PLC<br><br>Association for Middle Level Education: Building Teacher Collaboration School-wide<br><br>National Education Association - Tools to Build Relationships<br><br>National School Climate Center – Adult Learning Brief | **Safety:** Ensure "buy-in" from school staff early in year<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:**<br>• Analyze performance data to develop specific learning targets<br>• Creating SEL-infused lesson plans and school-wide programs<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:** Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students |

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| **Tiered Levels of Restorative Practices to Build Positive Relationships Among Students and Staff** | Using tiered levels of restorative practices to affirm emotions, build community and repair harm caused in schools fosters positive relationships among students and staff. Restorative practices can be used to hold students accountable for harm and address the needs of students or staff harmed and the school community.<br><br>Creates opportunities for staff to connect with students on safety issues. | It is very important for all school staff, students, and families take part in these activities. | Restorative Practices in Schools Program Directory<br><br>Videos on Restorative Measures in Schools<br><br>Restorative Measures in Schools Resources<br><br>Restorative Practices - An Administrator's Checklist<br><br>Restorative Interventions Facilitator's Toolkit<br><br>Books and Manuals Restorative Practices in Schools | **Safety:** Participating in circles and restorative practices will improve students social emotional safety<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:**<br><br>• Support teachers in continuing their education through professional development and other opportunities<br>• Provide opportunities for educators to develop awareness of student culture and background. |

## Practices to Improve School Climate Dimensions Related to the Institutional Environment

| Practice | How it Works | Key Stakeholders to Involve | Tools or Resources | Other Domains Impacted by Practice |
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| **"Asset-Based" Approach to Assessing Student Connectedness to the School** | When we start with what is "going right" with our school community rather than identify what is not working, we are more likely to garner the "buy-in" of a broader base of stakeholders. | Adults and students in the school. It can also be used with parents. | The Snowstorm Protocol<br><br>The Supermarket Protocol | **Interpersonal Relationships:** Creates stronger positive foundation upon which to build relationships between students and staff |

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| **Increase Understanding of the Role Youth-Adult Partnerships Play in Creating a Healthy School Climate** | Once a school community identifies the need to focus on improving connectedness and engagement between school staff and students, it is strongly suggested that the model promote equal partnership between both students and school staff.<br><br>This could be approached as a "mentor-mentee" experience for adult staff. Rather than focus on school leadership-led activities, it might be beneficial to identify and promote the voice of adult staff who are known to excel in creating youth-adult partnerships. | This involves school staff and students working together to build positive relationships with each other. | Building Relationships with Students – National Education Association<br><br>Effects of Teacher-Student Relationships – New York University<br><br>Improving Students' Relationships with Teachers – American Psychological Association<br><br>Youth-Adult Partnerships<br><br>Youth-Adult Tip Sheet | **School Safety:** Allow Students to participate in the creation of classroom norms and guidelines.<br><br>• Teaching and Learning: Create SEL-Infused lesson plans and school wide programs<br>• Provide opportunities for educators to develop awareness of student culture and background.<br><br>**Interpersonal Relationships:**<br><br>• Promote a better understanding and respect for diversity embedded in existing professional development<br>• Allow teachers to identify and share "best practices" for engaging with students. |

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| **Offer Students Incentives for Involvement in Extracurricular and Extended Learning Activities** | This may be as simple as removing barriers to involvement in these activities, such as cost, transportation, and consider providing food in the cafeteria after school hours, or keeping the school library staffed and open after school. Encourage staff and students to participate, and consider ways to support their involvement (i.e. student practice suggestion box). Publicly recognize the accomplishments of extracurricular groups/ activities. | School staff, students and community organizations | 101 After School Activities for Kids: Care.com<br><br>Afterschool Programs: Youth.Gov<br><br>Building Educated Leaders for Life<br><br>Closing the Gap through Extended Learning Opportunities: National Education Association<br><br>WNET: Developing an After School Program | **School Safety:** Create a student-centered alliance at your school<br><br>**Teaching and Learning:** Create SEL-infused lesson plans and school wide programs. |

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| **Partner with Community Groups that can Support Extra-Curricular Activities, Extended Learning and Enrichment Programs** | Community groups may have access to grants and/or other programming through which the school can benefit at minimal to no cost (i.e. artist-in-residence programs, gardening programs, etc.) | People from community organizations and associations, school staff, students and families | Achieving Results Through Community School Partnerships – Center for American Progress<br><br>Scaling Up School and Community Partnerships – Coalition for Community Schools<br><br>Resources for Building Community Partnerships – Edutopia<br><br>Strengthening Community School Partnerships: Coalition for Community Schools | **Teaching and Learning:**<br><br>• Provide opportunities for educators to develop awareness of student culture and background and create SEL-infused lesson plans and school wide programs<br>• Evaluate structural barriers – including budget, and how they affect teaching and learning – i.e. physical space, and state/Federal education and testing requirements. |

*This document was created by the School Safety Technical Assistance Center and the National School Climate Center to support school and district teams through the process of action planning using school climate data.*