

## Culture & School Climate

### Why Culture?

*“Culture is set of values, beliefs, or behaviors shared by a group of people based on race, geography, socioeconomic status, experiences, or other unifying denominators. Culture permeates throughout contexts and guides the ways that individuals assign meaning to, interact with, and adapt to their environments. Culture is ever evolving and results from intra-and interpersonal experiences, development, and growth”*

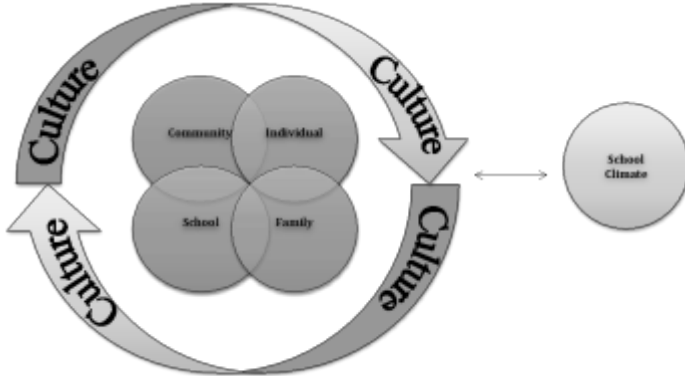
**Every person** has a cultural identity that can be influenced by these and other factors:



### Culture within the Context of Education

In schools, culture is....

- a part of everyone
- the way we teach
- the basis from which behavioral expectations are formed
- always relevant and changing
- the way we plan instruction



*Culture is both individual and collective*



*Individual and collective cultures interact in school settings*



*Two-way relationship between culture and school climate*

### Key Aspects of School Climate Information

#### Components

- Teaching & Learning structures and practices
- Relationships within and between subgroups
- Institutional environment/structure of physical setting
- Safety in school/traveling to and from school
- Accounts for all members of the school community (students, staff, families, etc.)
- Collected consistently across time
- Informs school practices

## Collecting School Climate Data

### The Georgia School Climate Survey Suite

The Georgia School Climate Survey Suite includes student, teacher, personnel, and parent perceptions of school climate. The Georgia School Climate Survey Suite includes four surveys:

	<b>GEORGIA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY</b>	<b>GEORGIA BRIEF SCHOOL CLIMATE INVENTORY (GABSCI)</b>	<b>GEORGIA SCHOOL PERSONNEL SURVEY (GSPS)</b>	<b>GEORGIA PARENT SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY</b>
OVERVIEW	Overall measure of climate based on dimensions of school connectedness, school safety, school orderliness, and peer and adult relations	Overall measure of climate based on dimensions of teaching and learning, relationships, and safety	Measures dimensions of staff connectedness, structure for learning, school safety, physical environment, peer and adult relations, and parental involvement	Measures dimensions of teaching and learning, school safety, interpersonal relationships, institutional environment, and parent involvement
TARGET GROUP	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-12	School personnel (e.g., teachers, administrators, staff)	Parents/guardians
NUMBER OF ITEMS	11	9	29	21

### Strengths of School Climate Data

School climate surveys yield meaningful data on overall school climate in terms of interpersonal relationships, safety, connectedness, the learning environment and aesthetics. Highlights of the data include:

- **Efficiency and ease of access:** Measured components of school climate are straightforward and cover a range of aspects related to climate within the institution.
- **Multiple perspectives:** Data represents perceptions of key stakeholders (e.g. students, parents, personnel), providing insight from individuals with different roles within the school community.
- **Capacity for comparison across participants, time, settings and more:** Data can be aggregated or disaggregated by participant type, grade, gender, race/ethnicity, etc., and multiple administrations of the survey allow for comparisons in attitude around school climate over time.
- **Adaptability:** The dimensions measured by school climate surveys are generalizable to most school settings and can be interpreted based on the culture around interpersonal relationships, safety, connectedness, learning environment and aesthetics that varies by school.

### Accessing the Georgia School Climate Surveys

The surveys can be accessed online at: [www.fieldtest.pbisassessment.org](http://www.fieldtest.pbisassessment.org)

Your district or state coordinator can get your school set up with access to the field test site.

If you have any questions about the surveys, email Dr. Tamika La Salle at [tamika.la\\_salle@uconn.edu](mailto:tamika.la_salle@uconn.edu)

School Climate, Culture & PBIS

**What is the relationship between school climate and PBIS?**

- Each school has a unique **school climate**- often discernible, but elusive and difficult to describe and measure.
- School climate is based on individual and group patterns of experiences of school life
- PBIS fosters the critical aspects of **positive school climate** through school environments that are:

Predictable

Common language, vision, expectations and experience

Safe

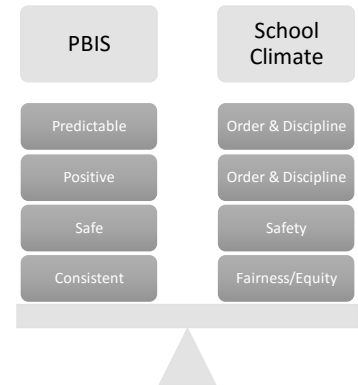
Violence and disruptive behavior is not tolerated

Positive

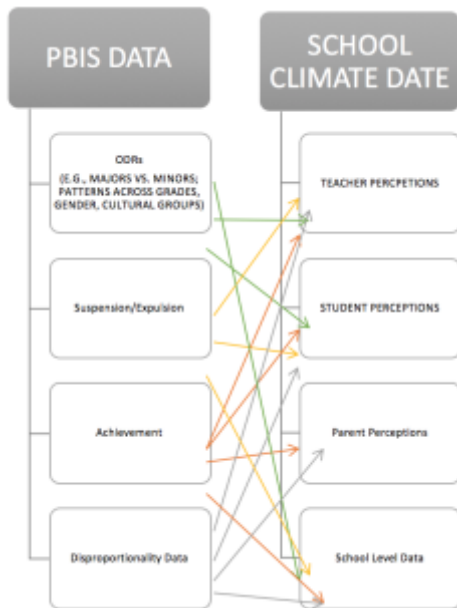
Regular recognition for positive behavior

Consistent

Adults use similar expectations



**Using PBIS and School Climate Data to Inform School Practices**



**Subjective data (school climate perceptions) and objective data (PBIS outcome indicators) can be used to support data-based decision making for school improvement efforts**

- PBIS outcome data is informed by other aspects of school functioning
- Successes and challenges are best understood by considering the outcomes and potential reasons behind them
- Comprehensive data can reveal information about cultural aspects that are affecting outcomes

PBIS decision making can be enhanced by integrating:

Multiple Sources of Data  
School climate perceptions  
School Outcome Data  
*Suspension/expulsion data*  
*Discipline referrals*

PBIS Fidelity Data  
School-wide Evaluation Tool  
Benchmarks of Quality  
Tiered Fidelity Inventory

## Steps to Evaluating PBIS & School Climate Data

### Sample Scenario

**1 Formulate questions before looking at data**

What are the key subgroups in your educational setting?  
What themes or major problems are you concerned with?  
What do you predict based on what you know?

*Random Middle School is a diverse school in a city with a large immigrant population. Student attendance rates are poor and decreasing each year.*

**2 Examine overall patterns**

Patterns across groups (teachers, students, parents)  
Patterns within groups (grade, gender, race/ethnicity)  
Patterns across time (school years)

*Teachers/staff show highest perceptions of school climate, followed by students and parents/families, respectively. PBIS fidelity data shows improvement in implementation.*

**3 Consider trends and groups that are specific to your school/district**

What are previous and current school problems?  
How do outcomes/perspectives differ across subgroups?  
How are the results consistent or inconsistent with your expectations?

*Student attendance rates have stayed the same since last year, despite worsening trends in recent years. ELL students report lower perceptions of school climate in comparison to their counterparts.*

**4 Examine PBIS data alongside school climate data to clarify the picture**

How do the data from one area inform, explain and clarify the complementary data?

*Out-of-school suspensions have increased this year for ELL students, and ELL students reported the lowest perceptions on adult-peer relations.*

**5 Create data-informed action steps**

Celebrate strengths  
Target concerns/areas for growth

*Recognize staff effort for increase in PBIS implementation fidelity*

*Expectations for out-of-school suspensions as last resort disciplinary action*

*Professional development for culturally responsive practices with students who have immigrated recently/are learning English*

## Next Steps

- Look up SC manual and resources [www.pbisapps.org/pbisassessment](http://www.pbisapps.org/pbisassessment)
- <https://www.pbis.org>
- Get to know the demographics of your school community
- Discuss integrating the surveys into your PBIS practices
  - Sample data collection
  - Fall/Spring collection
  - Ways to increase response rates
- Think about questions you want to answer with the data
  - If you already have this data- how have you used it