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School Climate: A Comparison of Teachers, Students, and Parents

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A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

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by

James Jacobs

August 2018

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Dr. Virginia Foley, Chair

Dr. Cecil Blankenship

Dr. Don Good

Dr. Pamela Scott

Keywords: School Climate, School Engagement, School Environment, School Safety

ABSTRACT

School Climate: A Comparison of Teachers, Students, and Parents

by

James A. Jacobs

This study was designed to examine the benefits of positive school climate and to measure the perceptions of school climate for intermediate grades in a Northeast Tennessee School district. An online school climate survey was used to collect responses from participants in intermediate grades and focused on the 3 major components of school climate: school engagement, school environment, and school safety. Data were collected for 2 consecutive years in 2016-2017 and 2017-2018. Response totals included 1,955 student responses, 116 teacher responses, and 210 parent responses that were analyzed and used for this study. Of the student totals, some students that were in 5th grade in 2016-2017 may have completed the survey again as 6th graders in 2017-2018.

Findings indicated that there were no significant difference in the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers in school climate over a 2-year span for this district. Research indicates there are multiple benefits to a positive school climate, including higher academic achievement, lower chronic absenteeism, and a decrease in discipline referrals.

DEDICATION

Writing this dissertation and completing the course work has been the greatest educational challenge of my life. I did not take on this challenge alone, and could not have completed it by myself. I have so many wonderful people to thank, starting with my family. First, to my wife Mary, the first person to believe that I had the potential to do so much more with my career. You believed in my leadership abilities even when I could not see it myself. To my children, Ben and Abby, thank you for being so understanding when I had to research and write, when you wanted to "hang out" or play outside. Thanks to my mother for her strong belief in me and for holding me to high expectations for being a good son, a good husband, a good father, and a good man. I also need to thank my colleagues in the program, Chris Feathers and Lori Church. We started the program together and pushed each other through each course and every assignment. Thank you for being there for me every step of the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would also like to thank my Chairperson, Dr. Virginia Foley. She worked very hard reading all of my work and providing meaningful feedback in a timely manner. Every time I felt stuck or blocked or tired she was there to jumpstart my thought process. She matched my passion and drive with direction and focus. I would not have made it to the end without her support. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Don Good, Dr. Pam Scott, and Dr. Cecil Blankenship. Thank you for investing your time and energy by serving on my committee. Your feedback was always outstanding and helped me create a quality product.

To my mentor, Dr. Debra Bentley, thank you for your support. You have been my role model since I started working in Johnson City Schools. You set the example of work ethic and professionalism on a daily basis. I have appreciated your attentiveness, your guidance, and your wisdom on many leadership issues. You continue to inspire me to be the best leader I can be.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

School climate has been a topic of study for many years because of its significance in the field of education. Schools reporting a positive school climate show more overall success for the school community. School climate refers to the atmosphere of the school, the character and quality of school life. School climate is characterized by the norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational practices (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). A positive school climate can foster the development of students, parents, teachers, and administrators which make up the school community (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008).

School climate is directly related to chronic absenteeism (Kearney, 2008). The state of Tennessee is pushing school districts to lower the number of students who are chronically absent throughout the state. Schools can be rewarded if they meet the state goals or they can be penalized if they fail to meet the state goals. Kearney noted that schools characterized as having a positive school climate had a lower rate of chronic absenteeism.

School climate has links to socio-emotional development for students. Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) posited that early adolescents go through cognitive changes that facilitate the skills necessary for setting and reaching learning goals for academic tasks. Early adolescents use appropriate learning strategies and show persistence in completing tasks. Being in a positive school climate supports students as they transition from middle to high school (Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Researchers have focused on classroom climate, classroom engagement, and its impact on academic achievement (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Patrick, Ryan, &

Kaplan, 2007; Ryan & Patrick 2001). Children with a connectedness to the school are more engaged as opposed to children that have a conflictual relationship with their teachers. When students do not get along with their teachers, they tend to be disengaged from school activities and have little to no feeling of school connectedness (Connell, 1990). In schools characterized as having a positive school environment Sulak (2016) found higher academic achievement than schools characterized as having a negative school climate.

Research indicates that leadership plays an important role in creating a positive school environment (Berg & Aber, 2015). According to Bartoletti and Connelly (2013) the principal has both a direct and an indirect impact on school climate and student learning. Principals have an indirect effect on school climate by setting the tone for relationships, creating a professional working environment, improving instruction, and keeping the school clean and safe. Leadership also affects student outcomes by strengthening professional learning communities and supporting best teaching practices increase student achievement.

Evidence from research indicates that teachers play a vital role in the formula for creating a positive school climate (Heller, 2004). Shapke and Perry (2012) discussed a teacher's sense of stress, teaching efficacy, and job satisfaction when defining school climate. Teachers can build a sense of stress from their perceived workload, and lack of support with student discipline. Positive and negative teacher-to-student relationships are other key factors affecting teacher perceptions and levels of stress at school.

Layermann and Konig (2016) contended that burnout occurs when teachers experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of students, and have a perceived lack of personal accomplishment. The teaching profession has one of the highest attrition rates in America with new teachers more apt to leave the profession early within the first 5 years (Heller, 2004).

Schools will have a better chance of retaining teachers if they increase teacher support, raise salaries, reduce student discipline, and give teachers a voice (Viadero, 2002).

Research also supports the role students play in creating a positive school climate (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003). According to Koth et al., (2008) school climate is the product of interactions with students and faculty and staff and has been linked to student achievement and performance. Roland and Galloway (2002) suggested that a teacher's management style may be related to the way the class's social network is structured. Teaching strategies that support collaboration and reinforce social values will improve student behavior and have a positive impact on student perceptions of the school (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1996). Student perceptions may also differ based on the subgroup for each child. Different subgroups may have different experiences at school and at home that affect school perception (Koth et al., 2008).

Federal and state governments are recognizing the importance of school climate. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2009) recommended school climate reform be a data driven, process oriented strategy for promoting healthy relationships and dropout prevention. The U.S. Department of Education (2007) invested federal funding for school climate measurement and improvement. Both Illinois and Pennsylvania have developed partnerships with the National School Climate Center to develop a systematic process to monitor and improve school climate (Tasker & Norga, nd). The Tennessee Department of Education created a school climate model to assist schools across the state. The Tennessee Department of Education (TNDOE) (2018) has an entire division devoted to improving school climate. They have defined safe and supportive schools and have developed a process for schools to improve school climate for schools across the state. The TNDOE has created a school climate survey to be administered

to teachers, parents, and students. Results of the climate survey are made public and can be used by leadership teams to make improvements to their schools.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to measure and compare the perceptions of school climate for intermediate level students, parents, and teachers in an east Tennessee school district by using a school climate survey. Current and previous research were examined for relationships between positive school climate and student achievement. Having data about school climate assists school leaders in making decisions on resources and school-wide initiatives to support or impact school climate. School climate is the personality of the school and touches every member of its community: teachers, students, parents, and administrators. This study focused on the perceptions of school climate for intermediate students, intermediate teachers, and parents of intermediate students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of overall school climate between students, parents, and teachers?

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school engagement between students, parents, and teachers?

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school environment between students, parents, and teachers?

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school safety between students, parents, and teachers?

Significance of the Study

This study focused on an intermediate population in an east Tennessee school district. Current research was used to determine the expected benefits of a positive school climate for the entire school community. For years, school climate has been researched and studied. Now, with the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015, a set of non-academic performance standards were introduced to school accountability (Spittler, 2017). Those standards include student engagement and teacher engagement, which are directly related to school climate. A positive school climate can make a school successful because of its effects on students, teachers, and parents. School climate encompasses school engagement, school environment, and school safety. One way to measure school climate is through the use of school climate surveys. Many State Departments of Education, including Tennessee, have developed a school climate survey package for district and school use. School leaders can administer school climate surveys and mine for data based on the perceptions of students, teachers, and parents. This data can help administrators make informed decisions and create action plans that will improve the climate of their school. The east Tennessee school district selected for study has a population of 1,240 fifth and sixth grade students in its system located at one intermediate school. In this study,

intermediate students, intermediate teachers and parents of intermediate students were surveyed about their perceptions of school climate.

Definitions of Terms

The terms listed below are important in this study, the findings, and the recommendations for further study.

1. *Academic Achievement*

   Academic achievement is the performance on formative and summative assessments typically measured by standardized tests (United States Department of Education, 2018).

2. *Chronic absenteeism*

   Chronic absenteeism is when a student misses 10% of the school year (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018).

3. *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*

   Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the act that created accountability measures for improving education in all schools. (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018). ESSA was signed by President Obama on December 10, 2015.

4. *Instructional leadership*

   Instructional leadership is the act of ensuring that school personnel, programs, procedures, and practices focus on the learning and achievement of all students (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018).

5. *Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)*

   Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are a form of professional development in which small groups of educators with shared interests work together with the goals of

expanding their knowledge and improving their craft (United States Department of Education, 2018).

6. *Race To The Top (RTTT)*

   Race To The Top was a grant program that had states competing for federal funding. States were encouraged and rewarded for creating educational innovation and reform. States were to create significant improvement in student achievement by closing achievement gaps with subgroups, increase high school graduation rates, and prepare student for college and careers beyond school (United States Department of Education, 2018).

7. *School climate*

   School climate is the personality of the school. Climate consists of school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning (United States Department of Education, 2018).

8. *School connectedness*

   School connectedness is a student's sense of belonging and engagement with the school (United States Department of Education, 2018).

9. *School culture*

   School culture consists of the guiding values and beliefs that are evident in the way a school operates (Fullan, 2007)).

10. *Social-emotional development*

    Social-emotional development is a process of developing and using the attitudes, skills, and knowledge that help adolescence and adults recognize and control emotions, develop

positive relationships, make responsible decisions (Tennessee Department of Education, 2018)

11. *Teacher efficacy*

Teacher efficacy is the is the teachers' confidence in their own ability to promote students' learning (Hoy, 2000)

Delimitations

Several delimitations are associated with this study. Only one school district was chosen for the study. Participants were given an online option to complete the survey. Also, 2 years of data were available for the study.

1. The study was delimited to fifth and sixth grade teachers, students, and parents of 5th and 6th grade students in an east Tennessee school district.

2. Surveys were given in an online format only. There were no paper and pencil surveys available.

3. Teachers were given 1 hour after school to complete the survey in lieu of a faculty meeting, as opposed to completing the survey on their own.

4. Only 2 years of data exist for this study (2016-2017, 2017-2018).

Limitations

Although the research in this study met its goals, there were several limitations in the study. Therefore, the results of this study may not generalize to any other population or setting. After completing this study, it is important to recognize the limitations and make improvements in each of the four identified areas to refine the results.

1. All of the teachers, students, and parents surveyed were in the same intermediate school community. This is a measurement of perceptions at one large school.

2. There was not a way to connect school climate and student achievement. All survey responses were anonymous so there was no way to link the student completing the survey to academic achievement scores.

3. Parent responses were low with only 10% completing the survey.

4. Survey results depend on the willingness of the participants to answer the questions honestly and openly.

5. In 2016-2017, 5th grade students and their parents may have taken the survey again as 6th graders.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

School Climate Defined

To study the correlations between school climate and the overall function of a school, we must first define school climate. School climate has been a topic of interest in schools for over a decade and has resulted in multiple definitions for the term. One way to define school climate is to use a set of descriptors. According to Freiberg (1999) school climate consists of atmosphere, feelings, tone, setting, or milieu of the school. Cohen et al., (2009) reported that school climate refers to the character and quality of school life. School climate may be based on a set of experiences in the school environment such as goal setting, values, norms, teaching and learning practices, and relationships. School climate is the personality of the school. A positive school climate can foster the development of students, parents, teachers, and administrators. School climate refers to the experiences and feelings of the school community as a collective, not any one group or individual (Gulses & Gulenay, 2014). Students, parents, teachers, and administrators work together to achieve the mission and vision of the school and to provide an environment that meets the needs of all its inhabitants. According to the state of Tennessee's Department of Education (2018) there are three main components of school climate: school engagement, school environment, and school safety.

School Engagement

School engagement is one of the three main components of school climate (TNDOE, 2018). As reported earlier by Cohen et al., (2009), it is important for students to feel supported

and motivated in school. They have a need for positive relationships with teachers, school leadership and other students to help build a connection to the school (TNDOE, 2018).

According to Bradshaw et al. (2012), many schools struggle to promote safe and supportive learning environments while being challenged by student deviant behavior, low attendance rates, and lack of school success. The Tennessee Department of Education (2018) states that students need to be motivated to achieve success in school. For this to happen students must feel supported and valued in their relationships with school personnel. By creating positive relationships with students, schools can create an environment of connectedness for students. The Department of Education created the Tennessee School Engagement Model that includes five modules:

1. Supportive Peer Relationships. A peer environment that is considered respectful, trusting, caring, helpful, and cooperative will make students feel safe.
2. Supportive Relationships with Teachers. Faculty and staff can support students as they develop a sense of accomplishment, feelings of efficacy, and self-esteem.
3. Supportive Relationships with School Leadership. School level administration set the tone for how others interact. School administration should be available and able to relate to students with genuine concern and respect.
4. Parental Involvement. Parents should be openly welcome in schools and play an important role in their child's education. Having strong parent-to-school relationships builds another layer of school connectedness for students.

Student Perceptions and School Climate

      Links to social-emotional and academics. School climate has links to social-emotional development and academic achievement for students, making it an important area of focus for schools. School climate is consistently recognized as a predictor of a student's social functioning and emotional health. Fostering a positive school environment can be conducive to improved academic functioning (Astor, Benbenishty, Ziera, & Vinokur, 2002; Payne, Gottfredson, & Gottfredson, 2003). Sulak (2016) used a multiple regression to observe the predicted academic achievement from school climate variables including racial composition, school size, disciplinary referrals, and crime levels in neighborhoods. Sulak found that schools with a positive school climate appear to promote higher academic achievement while schools with a negative school climate can depress student academic achievement. A negative school climate was characterized by high discipline referrals and low attendance rates. Sulak's focus in this research was on the frequency of disciplinary behaviors in the school. Koth et al., (2008) found that a lower rate of disciplinary behaviors were associated with a higher academic achievement for the school paired with higher student perceptions of discipline and order.

      School climate also refers to the quality and character of school life; its norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships. Cohen et al., (2009) identified four major areas that shape school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the external environment. Two aspects of school climate that can affect a student's self-esteem are positive feedback from teachers and commitment to school. A positive school climate may be effective at reducing at-risk behaviors and promotes health efforts. The researchers also reported that a responsive school climate nurtures an attachment to school and provides for a foundation for social, emotional, and

academic learning. A positive school environment provides connectedness and is a powerful motivator for student engagement.

A positive school climate is an important aspect in successful schools across America (Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003). School climate can be defined as values, shared beliefs, and attitudes that shape relationships between administrators, teachers, and students and creates guidelines for student behavior and norms for the school (Emmons, Comer, & Haynes, 1996). According to Koth et al., (2008) school climate is the product of interactions with students and faculty and staff and has been linked to student achievement and performance. They posited that people tend to react subjectively to life experiences as opposed to reacting objectively. Subsequently, a student's perception of the school's environment may have an impact on their behavior and play a role in a school accomplishing achievement targets and school improvement initiatives.

Koth et al., (2008) stated that difficulty in measuring school climate may happen because most studies focus on groups of students that may not reflect the entire school community. The school community in this case consists of the student body, parents, and teachers. In fact, each group may view the climate of the school differently depending on the group's perspective. It is likely that the climate in a specific classroom may vary depending on the teacher's classroom management style and his or her ability to build relationships. Roland and Galloway, (2002) suggested that a teacher's management style may be related to the way the class' social network is structured. Teachers who incorporate practices that are compatible for cooperation, collaboration, and social values between students may see positive student behavior and improve the student's perception of the school (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1996). Several relational variations may occur within a school. Those classroom relationships are student-to-

student and student-to-teacher. In addition, subgroups within the student body may view school climate differently based on their experiences. There following study links subgroups in a school to the overall school climate. Verkuyten and Thijs (2002) conducted a study of the subgroups ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status of 1,090 Dutch children in an effort to link school satisfaction for elementary school children. The study found that ethnic groups suffered more from peer bullying and had lower academic achievement than nonethnic Dutch children. Another classroom variable that effects student perceptions of school climate is the student's exposure to deviant behavior in the classroom. Stormshak (1999) conducted a study of 2,895 children in 134 first-grade classrooms to test two alternating hypotheses between peer preferences and child behavior. The study found that students who display a high degree of aggression may be excluded from the larger group unless the norms of the group are accepting of aggressive behaviors. The more the behavior falls outside of the established social norms, the more likely aggressive students are to be excluded from the group. The study also found that boys are more accepting of low-level aggressive behavior than girls as long as the behavior was within the acceptable norms for the group. Dishion, McCord, and Poulan (1999) found that groups with high numbers of aggressive students could affect the overall discipline and group dynamics. High performing students in those settings that do not display aggressive behavior become shy and withdrawn in the classroom (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). A clustering of student aggressive behavior may have a negative impact on the overall group's behavior and perception of the school environment.

Attendance and chronic absenteeism. Kearney (2008A) indicated that a positive school climate may have several benefits for the school community. Schools in which the principal has created a positive climate recorded lower rate of student absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is

quickly becoming a major focus around the nation. In the state of Tennessee chronic absenteeism is defined as a student missing 20% of the school year, whether excused or unexcused (TNDOE, 2018). Chronic absenteeism has been identified as a major risk factor for high school dropout and is closely associated with low student achievement, deviant student behaviors, and limited economic opportunities.

Van Eck, Johnson, Bettencourt, and Johnson (2016), conducted a study of middle and high school students that resulted in a significant finding of the relationship of school climate and chronic absenteeism. The study included students from 121 schools that included grades 6 – 12 in an urban public school system that completed a self-reporting school climate survey. Parents were informed and completed a consent form for the school system. The urban system's student population had a majority of African American students at 89% with 61% of the overall population receiving free and reduced lunch. Forty-three thousand ninety-four students were enrolled but only 25,776 students participated in the survey. Students rated their school climate as either positive, moderate, or negative on a series of questions. The researchers used a multilevel latent profile analysis to identify meaningful subgroup perceptions for individual student level and school level data. Van Eck et al. found that schools with a positive school climate had a significantly lower rate of chronic absenteeism. Schools with a moderate or negative school climate had a much higher rate of chronic absenteeism. Students rated school connectedness, parent involvement, relationships with teachers, and learning environments as important factors that create a positive climate. The researchers identified the need for strengthening relationships across the environment as a way to strengthen school climate.

Overall Impact of School

Culture and climate are used synonymously, but they have very different meanings. An organization consists of many different people from varying cultures (Gulsen & Gokyer, 2012). Organizational culture is the sum of the taught and shared beliefs, behavior characteristics, and work structures. If there is a strong organizational culture, the confidence of the members increases, and they feel more potent. The concept of organizational climate was primarily used to explain the value of organizational life and organizational behaviors. Organizational climate consists of characteristics that distinguish one organization from another. In addition, it is a measurable quality that is identified depending upon the collective perceptions of individuals working and living together in a specific place and affects the actions of the individuals working in the environment (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). School climate is a broad concept including teacher perceptions of the working environment. It is the psychological concept that governs the organization and affects the actions of the individuals who work at the school. School climate is the personality of the school. A healthy organizational climate helps individuals share and achieve common goals.

Teachers' Role in School Climate

Connecting teacher-to-student relationships and school climate, teacher perceptions of student behavior and motivation is the most consistent variable in predicting teacher perception of school climate (Klassen & Chiu, 2010). Teachers who perceived student behavior as good or great with high motivation among students reported lower student behavior stress, higher teaching efficacy, and greater job satisfaction. Teachers who have highly motivated students with good behavior spend less time on classroom management (Tsouloupas, Carson, Matthews, Grawitch, & Barber, 2010) and are able to use effective and engaging instructional strategies

more often (Woolfolk, Hoy, & Burke-Spero, 2005). In contrast, when a teacher perceives that students are not motivated to learn, the teacher experience a low efficacy for teaching (Shapka & Perry, 2012).

Professional learning communities and collaboration also play a role in teacher perception and school climate. McLester (2012) stated that professional learning communities have been around since the 1960s and have been used to describe a collegial and collaborative approach to education. According to Johnson (2003) there are benefits and costs associated with collaboration. Collaboration can be great for sharing the workload and helping teachers achieve common goals. Costs to collaboration are work intensification with more meetings and a greater workload to support the collaborative effort. Johnson also found that when teacher collaboration seems forced by administration, the teachers have a negative perception about collaboration and this adds to their level of stress.

Teacher burnout is another factor that can influence teachers' perception of school climate. Layermann and Konig (2016) contended that burnout occurs when teachers experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of students, and have a perceived lack of personal accomplishment. When a teacher's perception of work reaches this point, absenteeism, job attrition, turnover, low job performance, as well as psychological and somatic problems occur. According to Maslach (2003) a key contributor to job burnout is the enduring strain that results from the discrepancy between job demands and available resources to successfully succeed in meeting the demands.

Another factor affecting teacher perception of school climate is the teacher's general pedagogical knowledge. Blomke and Delaney (2012) found that teachers with more experience in the classroom have a better understanding of instructional practices and processes, student

motivation and learning, classroom management, lesson planning, and differentiated instructional methods than teachers new to the profession. Blomke and Delaney noted that first-year teachers also reported a high level of work related stress and burnout and a negative perception of school climate.

Leadership's Role in School Climate

It is important to know what role leadership plays in creating a positive school climate to support student outcomes. According to Bartoletti and Connelly (2017) the principal has both a direct and an indirect impact on school climate and student learning. Examples of a principal's direct impact on school climate include assisting teachers in improving instruction, using data to review and refine instructional practices, and keeping the school clean and safe. Leadership is about organizational improvement, establishing an agreed upon and worthwhile direction for the organization. Bartoletti and Connelly stated that leadership effects student outcomes by strengthening professional learning communities and fostering the use of instructional practices related to student achievement. Principals improve organizations by being aware of potential problems and then fixing them. According to the National Association for Elementary School Principals (NAESP), there are five key functions of a principal: shaping a vision, creating a climate, cultivating leadership, improving instruction, and managing people. Successful principals have a clear mission and goals for the school and should have strong hiring practices that attract the best teachers. A strong principal will retain the best teachers. According to the NAESP teachers agree that supportive and effective leadership is the reason they stay in their job.

Leadership plays a major role in school improvement. Research shows that a principal must investigate and understand the school's climate before she or he can implement change

(MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Accountability through high stakes testing has jeopardized school climate. Principals should set long-term climate and culture goals to ensure the success of their schools. MacNeil et al. noted that successful principals create a positive environment and can be key to improving teacher morale and student achievement.

Principals interested in improving school climate will create a work place that is supportive to teachers. Fiore and Whitaker (2005) grouped teachers into three main categories: The Irreplaceables, The Solids, and the Replacement Level. The Irreplaceables represent the top tier of teachers and have the ability to positively lead others in a school. They earn the respect of peers, teach other teachers, and have a positive influence on students in their classroom. The Irreplaceables improve the overall school environment. The Solids are the second tier and can represent up to 90% of a faculty. These teachers are characterized by being talented, dependable, and hardworking, adding to the good of the school. The Replacement Level is typically the bottom 5% of a school's faculty. They are ineffective, often negative, and easily replaced. This group tends to lack interpersonal skills, work ethic, and talents, offer little to the good of the school. Fiore and Whitaker indicated that principals who have a strong understanding of the make-up of their faculty, could hire top tier teachers who will improve the climate and culture of the school.

Fiore and Whitaker (2005) found that in creating a school with a strong climate and culture to meet the needs of all teachers, principals must display behaviors that will guide the development of the school.

1. Being visible to all school stakeholders. Teachers, students, and parents receive a sense of comfort from visible principal in various settings

2. Communicate regularly and purposefully. Varied forms of communication helps ease apprehension while the principal is visible

3. Never forget principals are role models. The principal is the most influential person in a school and should exude optimism and enthusiasm

4. Exhibit a positive outlook. As a role model principals must know that positive attitudes are contagious. To sustain a positive culture and climate the principal must consistently radiate positive energy

5. Empower other appropriately. Members of the organization share in the outcomes of the school

School principals must focus on building a positive school climate and culture within their buildings because of the strong impact it has on the classroom. Fiore and Whitaker (2005) said that principals indirectly affect teacher perceptions and student perceptions by what they choose to model. Modeling a positive culture and climate will have a ripple effect on the entire school community.

According to Fiore (2016) principals can display several behaviors that will make teaching rewarding and improve teacher perception about school culture and climate. One way to make teaching rewarding is by being visible. Principals must take time out of their day to visit classrooms regularly, not just during observations. Principals must be available during school social gatherings and be accessible before and after school hours. Make time to be available and visible. Principals have a host of administrative duties that may take them away from the classroom. Further, Fiore posited that they must trade the stacks of paperwork and impending deadlines to spend quality time with teachers and students. Being visible and available models support from administration, which can be a key factor retaining quality teachers. By being

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visible and available it is possible for principals to model positive behaviors such as making it ok for teachers to care about students and to care about the education profession.

The principal is the key figure in the organization who has a direct impact on school climate (Gulses & Gulenay, 2014). School can have either an open-school climate or a closed-school climate. In an open climate the principal listens to teachers, is supportive, and is respectful of their personal competencies. The principal demonstrates facilitative leadership and teachers enjoy positive relationships among faculty members (Hoy & Miskel, 2010). Schools with a healthy organizational climate can adapt to their environment and use their resources effectively so they can attain their goals.

Leadership plays a significant role in student learning and is only second to classroom instruction in all school factors in supporting student learning (Liethwood & Levin, 2010). Leadership has its largest impact on the school community when the stakes are high and the challenge is difficult. Leadership is both simple and complex and has two main goals. The first is to help the organization set goals. The second is to move members of the organization in motion to meet those goals.

Liethwood and Levin (2010) also listed instructional leadership as a significant challenge for principals. This phrase is more frequently used and has no clear definition as to what instructional leadership means. Many superintendents, principals, and teachers are making a push for instructional leadership, though if a principal only focused on instruction most of the principal's job would be incomplete. Liethwood and Levin stated that the closest thing to instructional leadership is attending standards training, content meetings, content professional development, training on current instructional models/teaching methods, and fairly evaluating instruction while providing meaningful feedback. Strong leadership qualities begin to emerge as

successful leadership takes place. It is important for the principal to be able to set a direction for an organization (Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). This practice will help focus teachers work as long as the goals are compelling. Strong leadership also develops people in the organization by offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, and provides models of best practices in the classroom. All of these qualities can foster a positive school climate.

According to Ingersoll (2001) there is a growing concern of teacher shortages across America. The average yearly turnover is 13.2% as opposed to 11% in other professions. Even more significant to the teacher shortage issue is that 29% of new teachers leave the profession after 3 years and 39% leave after 5 years (Viadero, 2002). In a later report, researcher Viadero (2018) confirmed teacher shortages in multiple states. According to Viadero, 50 states had computer-science teacher shortages, 48 states had science teacher shortages, and 45 states had foreign language teacher shortages. The number of high school graduates that are pursuing a career in education continues to drop at colleges across America (Aragon 2016). In 2010, 719,081 of high school graduates enrolled in teacher preparation programs compared to just 465, 536 high school graduates in 2014. Levine and Levine (2012) wrote that achievement tests are the only factor considered for assessing student mastery without consideration for test question selection, item analysis, or cut scores. Both No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top connected federal funding to high stakes testing. This process placed pressure on teachers, especially new teachers, to perform by attaining high student achievement test scores every year. The teaching profession has one of the highest attrition rates and new teachers are more apt to leave the profession early. Schools will have a better chance of retaining teachers if they increase teacher support, raise salaries, reduce student discipline, and give teachers a voice (Viadero, 2002).

According to Heller (2004) the principal stands at the crossroads of the students, faculty, community, parents, board of education, state policymakers, and universities. He or she must be creative and have the power to make decisions, take risks, and try new approaches to teacher support. Principals may need to take a more direct role with the educational staff and allow others to take over management activities. Heller stated the principal must create an induction program to integrate new teachers into the system to ensure they have successful experiences and will remain at the school. It is in the schools and classrooms where new teachers need to have success and satisfaction with the job (Johnson, 2001). Success and job satisfaction can be a contributing factor in teacher retention.

New teachers may need support in understanding the purpose and goals for the school. Mission, vision, and value statements are important components of the organizational structure (Darby, 2012). Wartnaby (2014) defined mission as the purpose for the school, the vision refers to the goals, and the values are the culture, character, and behaviors of the school. Understanding the foundational aspects of the school may help new teachers as they transition into the classroom.

Another way to support teachers in the profession is by creating professional learning communities with a focus on learning. McLester and Dufour (2012) provided three big ideas to support teachers in the classroom:

1. Make sure all students in the classroom are learning, which shifts the focus from teaching to learning

2. Create a culture of collaboration for faculty and staff

3. Focus on the growth for every student

Shapke and Perry (2012) grouped teacher perceptions of school climate into three variables: sense of stress, teaching efficacy, and job satisfaction. Research indicated that these variables are key influential factors in motivation, engagement, and commitment to the students they serve (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Teacher work stress is an emotional response to the work of a teacher (Kyriacou, 2001). Teacher efficacy is the ability of the teacher to achieve desired results from all students, even those less motivated to succeed (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2001). Job satisfaction refers to the amount of joy and gratification received from the job and is associated to well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007). Shapka and Perry (2012) argued that teachers with lower perceived stress and higher perceived efficacy and job satisfaction demonstrate higher student achievement scores and self-efficacy among their students. School climate is the relationships between the individuals at the school and collaboration between teachers and the administrative staff and may be key predictors in a teacher's perception of work related stress, teaching efficacy, and overall job satisfaction.

Parents' Role in School Climate

Family engagement has emerged as a key factor in supporting parents in their perception of schools (Ginsburg-Block, Manz, & McWayne, 2010). Parents who are highly engaged in schools are more likely to protect educational time at home for children. When parents work with students on a nightly basis on activities such as homework, they are modeling positive academic behaviors and high expectations for achievement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). By modeling this behavior parents are aligning curriculum goals with nightly routines that are supportive of school expectations. High parent-to-school engagement increases children's ability to show a high degree of social competence and academic achievement when compared to families who do not engage with schools (Ginsburg-Block et al., 2010).

Parents play a major role in the education of their child. They can influence their child's commitment to education, effort in the classroom, behaviors at school, and even truant behaviors. In 2013 the city of New York reported that around 7.5 million students miss up to 1 month of school per year. That rate doubles or triples when reporting statistics for students from poor families living in underserved communities (Naurer & Yerneni, 2008). Kelly (2012) reported that attendance was one of three main indicators of high school graduation. A Gates Foundation study revealed that 71% of recent dropouts reported that if their school had better communication with their families, it would have changed their behaviors and that of their peers (Xia, Fosco, & Feinberg, 2016). Less than half of those students said that their parents never received notification when they were absent from school (Faryon, 2011).

How do parents perceive the school their child attends? How much do parents value education? A consistent achievement gap exists between students from poor families who are at risk for dropping out of school (Hopson & Lee, 2011). The dropout rate among student from low-income families is 10 times the rate among students from high-income families (Cataldi, Laird, & Kewal Ramani, 2009). They struggle academically and have higher rates of discipline referrals to the office (Becker & Luthar, 2002). 25% of children in the United States live in poverty (NEA, n.d.). Children from poverty start school behind others in their cohort, they have lower achievement scores in math and language arts, and they have higher rates of absenteeism. Okpala, Smith, Jones, and Ellis (2000) reported students who are on free and reduced lunch programs perform below grade level in math and language arts. Malecki and Demaray (2006) found that these same students had lower an overall GPA. Berliner (2006) found that the cause of poor school performance came from stress the students experienced with family life, school, and the communities.

Poverty. Students from families that live in poverty are at risk for dropping out of school before graduation. According to Cataldi, and Kewal Ramani (2009) these students are 10 times more likely to drop out than students from families that have a higher income. They tend to have higher discipline referrals to the office and struggle academically. In addition, students who are on free and reduced lunch programs perform below grade level in reading and math, receive low scores on achievement tests, and have a lower overall GPA than their counterparts.

Hopson and Lee (2011) conducted a study to determine the impact of school climate on the academic achievement of students from high poverty families. Their research addressed three questions:

1. How do students from economically disadvantaged families compare with peers in behavior and grades?

2. Are positive student perceptions of school climate related to good behavior and grades?

3. Does school climate mitigate the association between poverty and success at school?

Hopson and Lee focused their study on middle school and high school students in one school district in New York, with a total of 485 students participating. School climate questions required Likert scale responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree to indicate the students support for each statement. Results from Hopson and Lee's study has many implications for future study. First, they found that regardless of a family's income level, students reporting a more positive perception of school climate had better avoidance skills for navigating social problems. In this case school climate was able to mitigate poverty. Second, when students reported school climate as poor, students from poverty had a significantly higher rate of behavior problem than students from higher income families. Third, student perceptions of school climate had very little impact on grades. Hopson and Lee implied that academic failure and drop out for

high poverty students were connected to stressors at home and in the community. They indicated that a positive school climate could mitigate those stressors and increase the likelihood of success for students.

Latino Families. The minority status and poverty level of Latino children in the United States has placed them at a high risk for academic struggles in school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). White and Asian American students were proficient in number, letter, and shape recognition and a much earlier age than Latino students (Psychological Association Report on Educational Disparities, 2012). Addy, Engelhardt, and Skinner (2013) reported that 67% of Latino children under the age of 6 come from families with low in-comes, ranking them second overall in subgroups likely to have socioeconomic hardships.

School Environment

School environment is the second of the three main components of school climate. There is a need for students to be in a school environment that has high expectations for academic rigor and strong values for student achievement. They should have a sense of involvement and belonging in their environment and should feel supported as they work to be successful (TNDOE), 2018).

Academic Achievement

Why is school climate important and how can it affect student achievement? School climate can be defined as the personality of the school. It is a set of experiences in the school environment such as goal setting, values, norms, teaching and learning practices, and relationships. Researchers are narrowing their focus on school climate to the classroom level by

studying classroom climate, classroom engagement, and its impact on academic achievement (Eccles, Wigfield, & Schiefele, 1998; Patrick, Ryan, & Kaplan, 2007; Ryan & Patrick 2001). A student's educational behavior and academic achievement is affected by the social need for connectedness within the school environment. Children who feel a connectedness to the school are more engaged as opposed to children who have a conflictual relationship with their teachers. Students who do not get along with their teachers are more likely to be disengaged from school activities. Students are more likely to succeed in the classroom when they feel connected to the school (Blum, 2005). Other research has indicated that students who have experienced negative relationships with teachers are at a greater risk of failing with student engagement activities and show low academic achievement (Baker, 2006; Stipek & Miles, 2008). Research also indicated that when students report a high degree of teacher-to-student conflict, the students were less engaged in classroom activities, did not enjoy attending school, and showed poor academic performance (Ladd & Burgess, 2001). Baker (2006) found a positive correlation between teacher-student conflict and poor report card grades and low standardized test scores.

Students' thoughts, feelings, attitudes, school engagement, and school behaviors are connected to school climate. Research has documented the relationship between student outcomes and school engagement (Finn & Rock, 1997), drug use (Bond et al., 2007), and academic achievement (Mark, 2000; Patrick et al., 2007; Wang & Holcomb 2010). Dotterer and Lowe (2011) conducted research to test whether school engagement mediates the relationship between classroom climate and academic achievement. The researchers assessed behavioral and psychological engagement in the classrooms of 1,364 children from 10 locations across the United States. They used existing state data, self-reported data, and classroom observations in their study. Dotterer and Lowe hypothesized that school engagement (psychological and

behavioral engagement) will be an equalizing factor in the relationship between classroom climate and academic achievement. They expected the classroom context (teacher conflict, social climate, quality of instruction) would predict how much students are engaged in the classroom. By observing classroom engagement, they could predict school engagement, which is a predictor academic achievement. This study reported three findings that contributed to existing research. First, it explored the belief that school engagement equalized the link between classroom context (climate) and academic achievement. Second, it examined whether the links between academic achievement and classroom context differ among groups of students with a history of academic struggles. Third, the study contributed to existing research by using both classroom observations and self-reporting data.

Researchers continue to connect student-teacher relationships to academic engagement and academic achievement (Decker, Dona, & Christenson, 2007). The quality of the relationship is even more important for at-risk students. Hughes (2008) completed a study of third grade at-risk students who had negative relationships with teachers. His study was confirmed when the same students continued to have negative relationships with teachers 3 years later. Hughes did report weaknesses in his research by stating that only teacher reports were used and no observations were conducted. In a separate study Hamre and Pianta (2001) found a trend among students from kindergarten through eighth grade. If a kindergarten student reported a significant amount of conflict with a teacher, the student continued to have discipline problems and poor grades through the eighth grade.

With strong evidence to connect classroom engagement, classroom climate, and student achievement, the strength of teacher and student relationship continues to be relevant and play an important role. Researchers in the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development

(SECCYD) found that classrooms were rated as having a positive climate had students who were rated as being highly engaged in classroom activities. In this particular study in a classroom with a positive climate high ratings were assigned for teacher sensitivity, productive use on time in class, and strong instructional pedagogy. Low ratings were given for micromanaging of students, chaos, teacher detachment, and student support. A similar study by NICHD ECCRN (2002) of first grade students who exhibited high levels of socio-emotional support were more like to be engaged in classroom activities, had more positive relationships with their peers, and were less disruptive with teachers. The study also showed that classrooms received high marks for classroom instruction had students who were observed to be more positive with other students, were more collaborative, and had better relationships with teachers.

Research continues to show a significance in the relationship between school climate and student achievement. If a positive school climate promotes academic achievement, then negative school climate (high discipline referrals, poor student perceptions) can depress academic achievement. Sulak (2016) conducted a study of school climate and academic achievement in suburban schools. She explained that suburban neighborhoods were created by "white flight" in the late 1800s, which lead to the decline of urban schools. Very few studies were completed on suburban schools where myths of homogeneity among the schools' population circulated. The purpose of Sulak's study was to examine the relationship of school climate factors such as office referral frequency and school size to the percentage of student below the 15th percentile on state standardized tests. Her study of suburban schools revealed that school size did not influence school climate, nor did it influence school discipline. A closer look at data showed that the composition of the student body did have an impact. Suburban schools with a higher percentage

of minority students have a lower academic achievement rate when compared to suburban schools with a lower percentage of minority students.

According to Xia (2016) student success in school is defined by academic achievement and school adjustment, which is an indicator of student success in later academic engagements. In turn, student's educational attainment is a predictor of working income, mortality, and quality of life (Petit, Yu, Dodge, & Bates, 2009). With these known factors and their relation to school climate, early success of students in school may be beneficial in a student's education. Zimmerman and Schunk (2001) stated that early adolescents go through cognitive changes that facilitate the skills necessary for setting and reaching learning goals for academic tasks. They use effective strategies for learning and showing persistence in completing learning tasks. In the researchers' overview and analysis of self-regulated learning and academic achievement, they found that self-guided learning is not a mental talent or academic ability but an intrinsic directive. Students face multiple changes throughout their time in public schools. As adolescents face transitions from elementary school, to middle school, to high school, both academic demands and social demands increase as well (Wang & Eccles, 2012). These factors have a bearing on a student's perception of school climate.

The state of Tennessee recognizes the importance of school environment. According to the TDOE (2018) a supportive school environment includes:

1. Academic Challenge: Class work needs to be challenging with supports provided for students to be successful. Recognizing academic achievements and providing positive feedback to students.

2. Supportive Discipline: Concise communication of disciplinary rules and procedures. The school staff is equitable when implementing procedures and rules. Consistency in the implementation of school practices will increase the student's perception of fairness.

3. Approval of the Physical Environment: The physical appearance of the school should be attractive, comfortable, and welcoming. Students should enjoy the appearance of their school and should take ownership in maintaining the building and grounds.

Government's Role in School Climate

US Department of Education Every Student Succeeds Act. President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act, ESSA, into law on December 10, 2015. This measure replaces No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which was signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965. The United States Department of Education (2018) provided a list of the key academic components of ESSA:

- Ensuring equity continues to advance by securing protections for disadvantaged and high-needs students

- Requiring that all K-12 student are taught a rigorous curriculum that prepared them for college and beyond

- Targeting low performing school by means of accountability and action to ensure students are making progress and graduation rates increase

The United States Department of Education also included, for the first time, nonacademic performance standards (Spittler, 2017):

- Student engagement

- Educator engagement

- Postsecondary readiness

- School climate and safety

Tennessee's Plan for Implementing ESSA. Every state must find a way to comply with the Every Student Succeeds Act. According to the Tennessee Department of Education (2018) the state department of education has laid the groundwork for complying with ESSA by raising state standards to more rigorous levels to prepare students for college and careers. The department of education has established a system of aligned state assessments to guarantee all students are developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills by using valuation and accountability systems. The Tennessee Department of Education (TNDOE) developed nine implementation resources for districts to follow:

1. Standards
2. Early foundations and literacy
3. High school and bridge postsecondary
4. Assessments
5. All means all
6. District empowerment
7. Accountability
8. Educator support
9. School improvement

The Tennessee Department of Education has included multiple resources for school districts to meet the nonacademic performance standards from ESSA including a state developed school climate process.

School Safety

School safety is the third component of school climate. According to the Tennessee Department of Education (2018) students need to feel safe and secure while they are at school. To focus on academics students need to be free from threats and harassment such as bullying. Students need to be separated from exposure to substance abuse in the school and home environment.

According to the United Stated Department of Education the interest is growing for school climate reform and a common understanding that creating a positive climate is a viable goal. A school improvement strategy that is data-driven and can promote safe and supportive K–12 schools is attainable. A recommendation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) confirmed the need for schools to promote school connectedness, healthy relationships, and dropout prevention should be data driven. The Safe and Supportive Schools grant was funded by the U. S. Department of Education (2007) and supports a statewide tool to measure school climate and improve school climate efforts. Recently there has been a rise in the number of State Departments of Education that are supporting the school climate reform as an important element in school improvement and bully prevention (Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013).

Ramelow, Currie, and Felder-Puig (2015) stated that students must feel physically safe in school, have a clear understanding of the code of conduct, and participate in conflict resolution courses. According to the state of Tennessee schools must create safe environments so students can focus on learning (TNDOE, 2018). Safe school environments are free of bullying, harassment, threats, physical violence, and contact with substance abuse. Tennessee also provides guidance and gives four components of school safety:

1. Physical safety: Schools should secure and secure and students should be free from harm and threats of physical violence.

2. Freedom from Substance Abuse: Students should be free from tobacco, alcohol, and drug use that can interfere with student achievement. Those behaviors associated with school can undermine a positive school climate.

3. Freedom from Bullying: Students should be free of bullying in schools. Bullying behavior is one of the most predominate and detrimental forms of school violence.

4. Acceptance of Differences: Schools should include tolerance as a core component of social and emotional wellbeing at school. Students should receive acceptance of appearance, background, and lifestyle while in the school environment.

Students working in a structured and orderly environment where they feel safe, supported, and encouraged will become more engaged academically (Wang & Eccles, 2013). The Tennessee Department of Education (2018) also suggested that schools must create an environment where students are motivated to learn and feel engaged in school activities. The school environment should include high expectations for student achievement and provide academic rigor. The school should communicate clear rules and procedures and provide attractive and well-maintained surroundings.

The state of Illinois has become directly involved in curbing threats to school safety. Tasker (nd) researched the state of Illinois systematic approach to improving school climate and bullying prevention. According to Tasker schools created climate leadership teams that focused on climate and bullying. The groups developed a common aim as opposed to a common interest, and teams meet to share strategies, successes, and failures. Teams would engage in professional development sessions that focused on:

1. Understanding data from school climate surveys

2. Using student discipline data to increase bullying prevention efforts

3. Recognize bias and the association with bullying behaviors and student discipline.

Tasker found that leadership teams across the state of Illinois would continuously use this process of reviewing data to improve school climate and reduce bullying.

Likewise, the state of Pennsylvania has developed its own process for improving school safety and school climate. Norga (nd) reported on a 3-year partnership between the Pennsylvania School Leadership Initiative (SCLI), the National School Climate Center, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Their goal was to improve school climate and raise student achievement. According to Norga the SCLI created a model of improvement that includes a 5-stage cycle:

1. Prepare and evaluate school climate data

2. Planning using the data

3. Action planning

4. Re-evaluating progress

5. Repeat the process

Norga reported that data were collected from two surveys, the Pennsylvania School Climate Survey and the Climate Readiness Tool. These surveys collect data from families, students, and staff. The data also indicate the level of readiness the leadership team has to create an actionable improvement plan. The state's first goal was to build capacity in schools to support education leaders in creating a safe, supportive, engaging, and healthy climate that support learning. The work focused on the importance of helping students attend to career training, which fosters educational equity. Nogra reported that an important outcome for schools was

finding ways to connect to subgroups and to provide rigorous opportunities for high student

achievement. This very systematic process focuses on school climate, safety, and student

learning.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

School climate affects student outcomes and student achievement (Sulak, 2016). Having data about school climate assists school leaders in making decisions on resources and school-wide initiatives to support or impact school climate (Ramelow, Currie, & Felder-Puig, 2015). This study focused on the perceptions of school climate for intermediate students, intermediate teachers, and parents of intermediate students. Included in this chapter are research design, research questions, population, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and research questions.

This research design was a nonexperimental quantitative research study. A comparative descriptive approach was used for the perceptions of three groups: students, teachers, and the parents of intermediate students

Research Questions and Null Hypotheses

The following research questions and null hypotheses guided this study. The dependent variables are student perceptions, teacher perceptions, and parent perceptions. The independent variable is the school climate survey.

Research Question 1

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of overall school climate between students, parents, and teachers?

$H_0 1$: There is no significant difference in perceptions of overall school climate between students, parents, and teachers.

Research Question 2

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school engagement between students, parents, and teachers?

H_02: There is no significant difference in perceptions of school engagement between students, parents, and teachers.

Research Question 3

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school environment between students, parents, and teachers?

H_03 There is no significant difference in perceptions of school environment between students, parents, and teachers.

Research Question 4

Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school safety between students, parents, and teachers?

H_03 There is no significant difference in perceptions of school safety between students, parents, and teachers.

Population and Sample

The population selected for this study consisted of intermediate students, parents of intermediate students, and intermediate grade teachers from an east Tennessee school district. The student population for the intermediate school was 1,220 in 2017, and was 1,209 in 2018, which was the entire 5th and 6th grade population of the district. In 2017 there were 608 males and 612 females. In 2018 there were 612 males and 597 females. The ethnic makeup in 2017 was 882 white, 173 black, 113 Hispanic, 10 Native American, and 38 Asian. The ethnic makeup in

2018 was 845 white, 181 black, 127 Hispanic, 13 Native American, 41 Asian, and 2 native

Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. In 2017 there were 413 economically disadvantaged students,

122 special education students, and 67 English Language Learning students. In 2018 there were

377 economically disadvantaged students, 106 special education students, and 87 English

Language Learning students.

All intermediate teachers in this east Tennessee school district were given the opportunity

to complete this survey. The following are self-reporting subcategories for teachers that

completed the survey:

- 48   5th grade teachers

- 50   6th grade teachers

- 2   Did not select grade level

- 17   male

- 78   female

- 2   African American

- 3   Asian or Pacific Islander

- 72   white

- 1   Hispanic or Latino

    Self-reported years of experience for intermediate teachers in the district is as follows:

- 1 year or less   9

- 2 -3 years   11

- 4 – 6 years   14

- 7 – 10 years   14

- 11 – 19 years   18

- 20 years +   11

All parents of intermediate students were given the opportunity to complete the survey. Of the overall population, 130 responded and, therefore, comprise the sample. Parents completing the survey may have selected several categories skewing the representative groups. The makeup of the sample parent population was:

- 1   grandparent

- 1   stepparent

- 129   parents

- 72   5th grade parents

- 56   6th grade parents

- 1   American Indian or Alaska Native

- 3   Black or African American

- 4   East or Southeast Asian

- 6   Hispanic or Latino

- 1   Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

- 115   white

- 3   two or more races

- 2   other

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was the Tennessee School Climate Survey. The survey was developed by the state of Tennessee to provide schools and districts with data to support decision-making with resources and programs for school-wide initiatives. The school climate survey is a voluntary survey created by the state of Tennessee and is targeted at students, teachers, and parents. The Tennessee school climate survey measures three broad categories: engagement, safety, and environment. Item responses are Likert based include the options of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The student survey had 85 items, the parent survey had 47 items, and the teacher survey had 88 items. District level and school level leadership teams used the results from the survey to create strategies for school improvement.

Data Collection

At the beginning of the year, I contacted the Director of Special Projects with the Tennessee Department of Education, to participate in their school climate survey. As the school principal I signed a Memorandum of Understanding and then presented appropriate paperwork to the Director of Johnson City Schools. He approved our participation by signing the Memorandum of Understanding and returning it to the Director of Special Projects. Once our district had signed the agreement, the Commissioner of Education for the state of Tennessee, approved it.

Next, I communicated with parents about the upcoming school climate surveys by using email, the school web site, and printed hard copies of survey information. I used the state created parent permission form to receive parent permission for students to participate in the survey. I gave parents an opportunity to view the student surveys before we began the process by sending

home hard copies and making a digital version available on our web site. I emailed teachers instructions about the school climate surveys, including a timeline, and provided information from the state on how the information will be used by our school.

Administration of the survey was the next step. I emailed all parents of intermediate students a link to the state school climate survey and gave them a 1-month window to complete the survey. I provided the link to the survey on our school web site for parents without email and provided hard copies of the survey to parents without internet access. Students were given a 1-week window to complete the survey in class. Teachers read the survey aloud while students completed the answers. Teachers were given a 1-month window to complete the survey on their own time. Teachers were offered 1 day after school to complete the survey in lieu of a regular faculty meeting.

The Health and Safety Division of the Tennessee Department of Education collected the data after the survey windows had closed. Once individual schools complete their surveys, the Director of Special Projects compiled and returned to the result immediate analysis. The Supervisor of Elementary Instruction for Johnson City School and the Director for Johnson City Schools granted permission for this district data to be used in this study. The data collected were completely anonymous and open to the public. There is no process that pairs answers to the person taking the survey. There were no identifying characteristics, names, assigned numbers, etc., used during the study. After the state has completed analyzing individual school information statewide school surveys are published on its web site for general public use.

Data Analysis

A series of Chi Square tests were used to determine if there were any significance between the three dependent subgroups. Teacher responses were divided into positive (strongly agree and agree) and negative (strongly disagree and disagree). Student responses were divided into positive (strongly agree and agree) and negative (strongly disagree and disagree). Parent responses were divided into positive (strongly agree and agree) and negative (strongly disagree and disagree). The Chi Square test was used to determine if there was a significance between groups based on their responses. All data were analyzed at the .05 level of significance.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Data were analyzed to identify if there were significant differences in perceptions of intermediate students, teachers, and parents of intermediate students in an East Tennessee school district on school climate.

RQ 1: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of overall school climate between students, parents, and teachers?

Ho1: There is no significant difference in perceptions of overall school climate between students, parents, and teachers.

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in perceptions of overall school climate. The three groups were students, parents, and teachers, which accounted for 1,140 responses. School climate consists of three categories: engagement, environment, and safety. The results of the test were not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1,140) = .007, p > .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, which indicates there was no significant difference between the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers on school climate. Figure 1 displays the perceptions of each group.
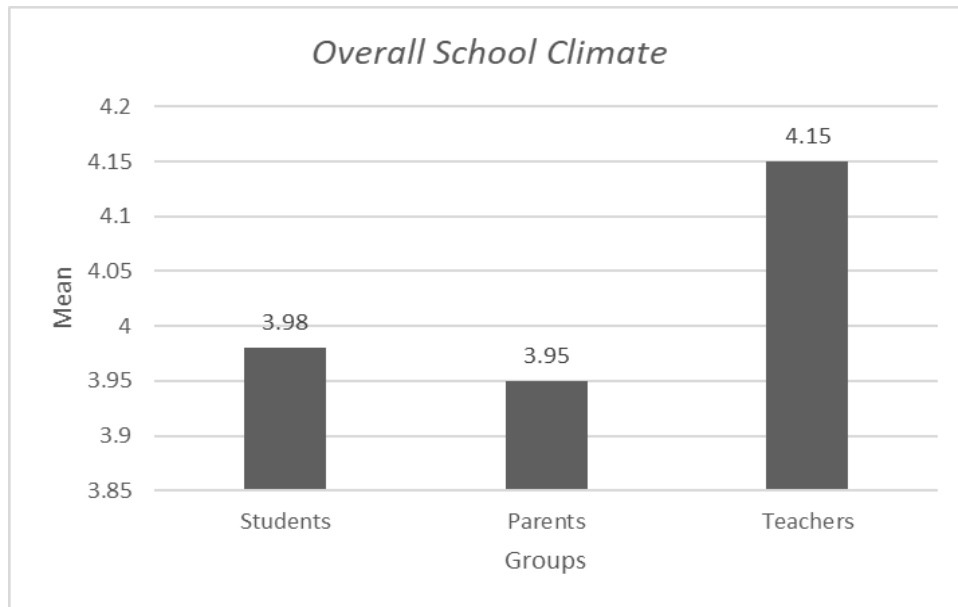
Figure 1. Indicates the average mean of perceptions on overall school climate for students, parents, and teachers based on the school climate survey.

RQ 2: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school engagement between students, parents, and teachers?

Ho2: There is no significant difference in perceptions of school engagement between students, parents, and teachers.

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in perceptions for school engagement. The three groups were students, parents, and teachers, which accounted for 1,140 responses. The results of the test were not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1,140) = .009, p > .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating there was no significant difference between the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers for school engagement. Figure 2 displays the perceptions of each group.
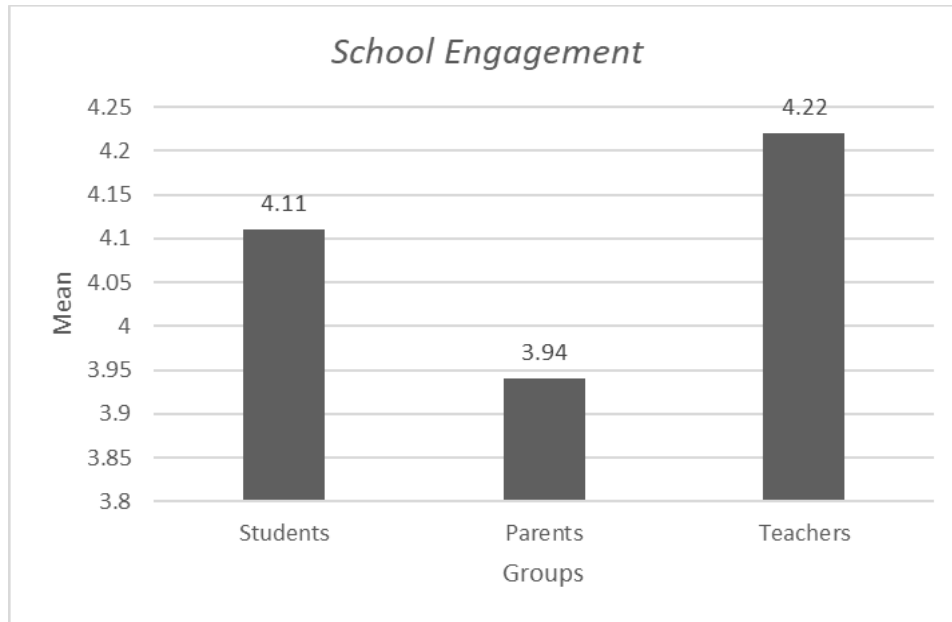
Figure 2. Indicates the average mean of perceptions on school engagement for students, parents, and teachers based on the school climate survey.

RQ 3: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school environment between students, parents, and teachers?

Ho3: There is no significant difference in perceptions of school environment between students, parents, and teachers.

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in perceptions for school environment. The three groups were students, parents, and teachers, which accounted for 1,140 responses. The results of the test were not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1,140) = .02, p > .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating there was no significant difference between the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers for school environment. Figure 3 displays the perceptions of each group.
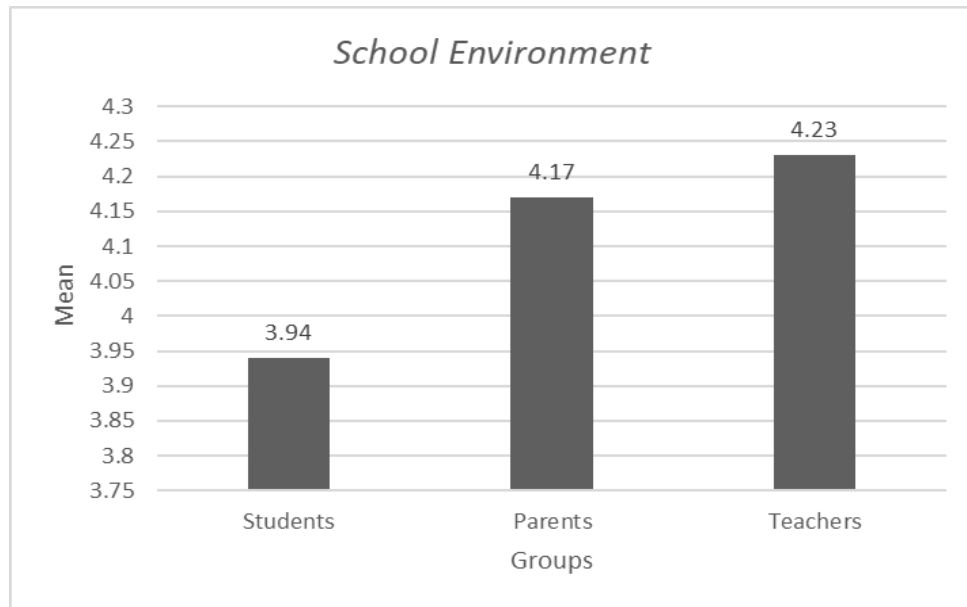
Figure 3. Indicates the average mean of perceptions on school environment for students, parents, and teachers based on the school climate survey.

Research Question 4

RQ 4: Is there a significant difference in perceptions of school safety between students, parents, and teachers?

Ho4: There is no significant difference in perceptions of school safety between students, parents, and teachers.

A one-sample chi-square test was conducted to assess whether there were significant differences in perceptions for school safety. The three groups were students, parents, and teachers, which accounted for 1,140 responses. The results of the test were not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 1,140) = .009, p > .05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating there was no

significant difference between the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers for school

safety. Figure 4 displays the perceptions of each group.
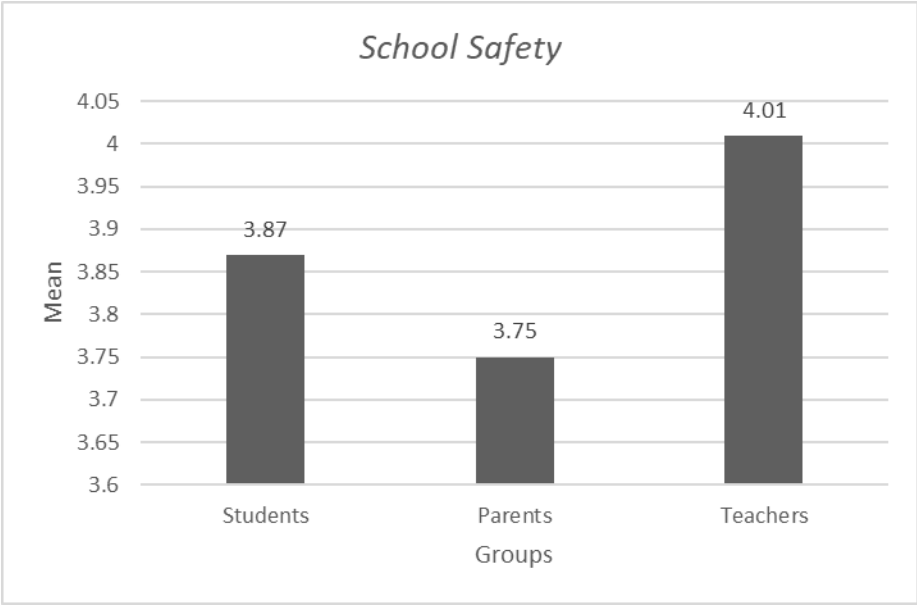
Figure 4. Indicates the average mean of perceptions on school safety for students, parents, and

teachers based on the school climate survey.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of school climate for students, parents, and teachers in an east Tennessee school district. Responses were collected from 5th and 6th grade students, parents of 5th and 6th grade students, and 5th and 6th grade teachers at the single intermediate school in the district. There were 1,955 student responses, 116 teacher responses, and 210 parent responses that were collected over a 2-year period. The findings from this study showed no significance between the perceptions of the three groups on the overall climate, school engagement, school environment, and school safety.

The results of this study indicates that all groups have positive perceptions that are closely grouped together, showing they have very similar perceptions of the school's climate. Positive school climate has links to social-emotional development and academic achievement for students. Creating a positive school climate in each individual classroom will improve the overall school environment and may combat chronic absenteeism. Maintaining a highly trained and dedicated teaching staff will help support a positive school climate, as will having school administrators that lead the way and set the example. Creating a welcoming and engaging environment for parents and understanding the need to reach out to families in subgroups to improve parent perceptions will build a positive school climate.

Current and previous research were used to determine the importance of positive school climate. With so many benefits of a positive school climate, school leadership must make this a priority. School climate has far reaching effects on all of its stakeholders, including students, teachers, and parents. School climate influences achievement, academics, discipline, attendance,

safety, and socio-emotional development. This study was focused on intermediate grades in an east Tennessee school district.

The purpose of this quantitative study was to measure and compare the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers for intermediate grades in an east Tennessee school district by using a state created school climate survey. Students, teachers, and parents were given an online survey that measured school environment, school engagement, school safety, and the overall school climate. A series of Chi Square tests were used to measure the perceptions of each group within the three categories. An additional Chi Square test was used to determine the overall school climate. The survey was given two consecutive years, in 2016-2017 and again in 2017-2018. Both sets of data were used in the study.

Conclusions and Discussions

Research Question 1

Based on the responses provided, there was no significant difference between students, teachers, and parents for the overall school climate using a .05 level of significance. Student responses had a mean score of 3.98, parent responses had a mean score of 3.95, and teacher responses had a mean score of 4.15. Each group had very similar scores, which indicates they have similar perceptions of the overall school climate. The Director of Safe and Supportive schools for the state of Tennessee stated that this particular school was one of a few to show growth over the last 2 years.

Research Question 2

According to the Tennessee Department of Education (2018), schools need to have high marks in supportive peer relationships, supportive teacher relationships, supportive relationships with leadership, and parental involvement. Based on the responses provided, there was no significant difference between students, teachers, and parents for school engagement using a .05 level of significance. Student responses had a mean score of 4.11, parent responses had a mean score of 3.94, and teacher responses had a mean score of 4.22. Each group had very similar scores, which indicates they may have similar perceptions of school engagement.

Research Question 3

Based on the responses provided, there was no significant difference between students, teachers, and parents for school environment using a .05 level of significance. Student responses had a mean score of 3.94, parent responses had a mean score of 4.17, and teacher responses had a mean score of 4.23. Each group had very similar scores, which indicates they have similar perceptions of school environment. This category received the highest mean scores which would indicate an area strength for the school. Fostering a positive school environment can be conducive to improved academic functioning (Astor, Benbenishty, Ziera and Vinokur, 2002; Payne, Gottfredson, and Gottfredson, 2003).

Research Question 4

Based on the responses provided, there was no significant difference between students, teachers, and parents for school safety using a .05 level of significance. Student responses had a mean score of 3.87, parent responses had a mean score of 3.75, and teacher responses had a

mean score of 4.01. Each group had very similar scores, which indicates they have similar perceptions of school safety. This category received the lowest scores but was still on the upper end of the 1-5 scale. To focus on academics students need to be free from threats and harassment such as bullying (TNDOE, 2018).

Implications for Practice

The following are implications for creating a positive school climate for students, teachers, and parents:

1. School climate has links to social-emotional development and academic achievement for students. Cohen et al., (2009) reported that a responsive school climate nurtures an attachment to school and provides for a foundation for social, emotional, and academic learning. A positive school environment provides connectedness and is a powerful motivator for student engagement. There are many ways schools can create connectedness for students including:

   a. Increasing band, chorus, and orchestra participation

   b. Creating strong afterschool clubs, both academic and nonacademic

   c. Providing opportunities for athletics

   d. Creating a wide range of intramural activities

   e. Providing students with positive feedback from teachers and leadership

   f. Recognizing student achievements

2. Creating a positive climate in each individual classroom will improve the overall school environment. It is likely that the climate in a specific classroom may vary depending on the teacher's classroom management style and his or her ability to build relationships.

Roland and Galloway (2002) suggested that a teacher's management style might be related to the way the class's social network is structured. Teachers who incorporate practices that are compatible for cooperation, collaboration, and social values between students may see positive student behavior and improve the student's perception of the school (Solomon, Battistich, Kim, & Watson, 1996).

3. Creating a positive school climate may combat chronic absenteeism. Van Eck, Johnson, Bettencourt, and Johnson (2016) conducted a study of middle and high school students which resulted in a significant finding that links school climate and chronic absenteeism. Van Eck et al. found that schools with a positive school climate had a significantly lower rate of chronic absenteeism. Schools with a moderate or negative school climate had a much higher rate of chronic absenteeism. Students rated school connectedness, parent involvement, relationships with teachers, and learning environments as important factors that create a positive climate.

4. Maintaining a highly trained and dedicated teaching staff at your school can create a positive school climate. Blomke and Delaney (2012) found that teachers with more experience in the classroom have a better understanding of instructional practices and processes, student motivation and learning, classroom management, lesson planning, and differentiated instructional methods than teachers new to the profession. Layermann and Konig (2016) contended that burnout occurs when teachers experience emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of students, and have a perceived lack of personal accomplishment. When teachers have a negative perception of their work, absenteeism, job attrition, turnover, low job performance, as well as psychological and somatic problems occur.

5. Leading the way for creating a positive school environment is the responsibility of school administrators. According to Bartoletti and Connelly (2017) the principal has both a direct and an indirect impact on school climate and student learning. Actions that require the direct involvement of the principal includes:

    a. Assisting teachers to improve instruction

    b. Meaningful professional development

    c. Specific feedback during teacher evaluations

    d. Using data to drive and improve instruction

    e. Leading data conferences to define interventions and enrichment opportunities for students

    f. Building strong teacher, parent, and student relationships

    g. Being visible and accessible

    h. Casting a vision

    i. Hiring and retaining the best teachers

    j. Creating a clear path to leadership for the school community

    k. Communicate regularly and purposefully

    l. Exhibit a positive outlook, being the role model

    m. Empower others appropriately

6. Creating a welcoming and engaging environment for parents will improve school climate. A key factor in supporting parents in their perception of schools is family engagement (Ginsburg-Block, Manz, & McWayne, 2010). Parents who are highly engaged in schools are more likely to protect educational time at home for children. When parents work with students on a nightly basis on activities such as homework, they are modeling positive

academic behaviors and high expectations for achievement (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001).

7. Reaching out to families in subgroups can improve parent perceptions of school climate. Students from families that live in poverty are at risk for dropping out of school before graduation. According to Cataldi and Kewal Ramani (2009) these students are 10 times more likely to drop out than students from families that have a higher income. The minority status and poverty level of Latino children in the United States has placed them at a high risk for academic struggles in school (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

8. Strengthening school engagement improves school climate. Dotterer and Lowe (2011) indicated that school engagement equalized the link between academic achievement and students with historically poor classroom performance.

9. Creating a safe and supportive learning environment can create a positive school climate. Ramelow, Currie, and Felder-Puig (2015) stated that students must feel physically safe in school, have a clear understanding of the code of conduct, and participate in conflict resolution courses.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the literature reviewed and the results from the current study, significant and ongoing research is needed to provide further implications for the impacts of improving school climate. The following are recommendations for future study:

1. Pair student perceptions with academic achievement. This would give the researcher the ability to investigate whether a correlation exists between perceptions and achievement. Previous research documented the relationship between student outcomes and school

engagement (Finn & Rock, 1997), drug use (Bond et al., 2007), and academic achievement (Mark, 2000; Patrick et al., 2007; Wang & Holcomb 2010).

2. Determine if there is a relationship between positive school climate and chronic absenteeism. Again, connecting the students to their responses on the school climate survey to their attendance rate would provide meaningful feedback. According to the TNDOE (2018) chronic absenteeism has been identified as a major risk factor for high school dropout and is closely associated with low student achievement, deviant student behaviors, and limited economic opportunities.

3. Connect positive school climate and teacher attendance and job retention. It would be noteworthy to determine if a relationship exists between teacher perceptions of the school climate and the amount of work they miss or to teachers that left the school. According to Ingersoll (2001) the average yearly turnover is 13.2% as opposed to 11% in other professions. Even more significant is that 29% of new teachers leave the profession after 3 years and 39% leave after 5 years (Viadero, 2002). According to Maslach (2003) a key contributor to job burnout is the enduring strain that results from the discrepancy between job demands and available resources to succeed in meeting the demands.

4. While results of this study did not make a connection to student perceptions and office referrals, matching this data would provide meaningful feedback for future studies. According to Koth et al., (2008) school climate is the product of interactions with students and faculty and staff and has been linked to student achievement and performance. Subsequently, students' perception of the school's environment may have an impact on their behavior and play a role in a school accomplishing achievement targets and school improvement initiatives.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STUDENT SURVEY

Dear Student,

This survey will help us to know how you feel about your school. Your responses will help us understand more about what makes school a good place to be, and how changes may be made to improve it. No one will be able to see how you answered. Please be honest in your answers and tell us what you really think. This survey is VOLUNTARY. You do not have to take this survey, although we hope that you will choose to do so. If you choose to voluntarily take this survey, you do not have to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you may stop taking the survey at any time. Thank you for your help. If you have any questions during this survey, please feel free to ask the survey administrator who will explain the purposes of the survey, provide instructions for completing the survey, and be in the room to assist you if needed. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

Please tell us what grade you are in.
1. 5th grade

2. 6th grade

3. 7th grade

4. 8th grade

Please indicate your race. You may choose a minimum of one or as many as apply.
1. African American

2. Asian/Pacific Islander

3. Hispanic

4. Native American/Alaska Native

5. White

Please indicate your gender.
1. Female

2. Male

The first set of questions ask about your experiences at school, how you are treated, what you like and what you don't like. There are no right or wrong answers. Give us your first impression concerning how much you agree or disagree that these statements describe your school this year. Your opinions are important and will be used to help design programs and services for your school. We need your ideas and experience to do this. Thank you for your help!

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about your TEACHERS at

school. Most of my teachers...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1...notice if I have trouble learning something.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2...often connect what I am learning to life outside the classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3...challenge all students to do their personal best.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4...praise me when I work hard in school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5...allow me to revise my work to learn from my mistakes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6...assign creative work that allows me to think for myself.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7...help me get excited about what I am learning in my classes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8...give me individual attention when I need it.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I have AT LEAST ONE teacher who...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9...takes the time to listen to what I have to say.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10...cares about me.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11...knows me well.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12...has confidence in me.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13...is available to me when I need them.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14...will try to help me when I am feeling sad, angry, or depressed.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15...I can go to if I feel unsafe.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about your SCHOOL. I feel like...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
16...this school is a place where I can learn and do well in my classes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17...what I'm learning in my classes will be important for my future.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18...my teachers have helped me improve my study skills.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19...I can understand difficult concepts with the help of my teachers.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20...my teachers will help me succeed in school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL.

I feel like...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
21...this school is a good match for me.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22...I am safe at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23...I look forward to going to school most days.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24...I am a part of this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about STUDENTS at your

school. Students at my school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
25...care about each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
26...respect each other's differences.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27...try to protect each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
28...trust each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29...cooperate with one another when working on schoolwork together.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
30...are often friends with students from different races, religions, and cultures.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
31...are easy to get to know.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about the PRINCIPAL or ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL at your school.

At my school, there is a principal or assistant principal who...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
32...is easy to approach if I have a problem.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
33...treats students with respect.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34...listens to student ideas.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about your PARENT(s) or

GUARDIAN(s). My parent(s) or guardian(s)...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
35...are involved in my school life.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
36...know what my grades are.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
37...regularly attend school events, such as sporting events (e.g., football games, soccer games) or student performances (e.g., plays, musical performances).	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
38...talk to my teachers (e.g. in person, over the phone, by email).	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

The next two questions ask about SCHOOL EVENTS and EXTRA CURRICULAR TEAMS, CLUBS, or ACTIVITIES that you attend or participate in at school.

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39. I regularly attend school-sponsored events, such as, school dances, sporting events, student performances, or other school activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
40. I regularly participate in extra-curricular activities offered through my school, such as school clubs or organizations, musical groups, sports teams, student government, or any other extra-curricular activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about STUDENTS at your

school. Students at my school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41...carry guns or knives to school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
42...belong to gangs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
43...threaten to hurt other students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
44...steal money, electronics, or other valuable things while at school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
45...damage or destroy other student's property.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
46...damage or destroy school property.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
47...fight a lot.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
48...are sometimes physically hurt by their boyfriends or girlfriends while at school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
49...Students know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood) or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
50...If students hear about a threat to school or student safety, they would report it to someone in authority.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

The next set of questions asks about things that student do at school that make you feel bad or are hurtful to you. Please mark HOW FREQUENTLY these things have happened to you.

During this school year, how often how anyone called you an insulting or bad name at school having to do with...

	Almost Everyday	Once or Twice a week	Once or Twice a Month	Once or twice this school year.	Never
51...your race or ethnic background?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
52...your religion?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
53...any disability you may have?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
54...your relationships with your boyfriends or girlfriends while at school?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
55...how much money your family makes?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
56...your weight or physical appearance?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

We would like to know about any bullying that happens at your school. Bullying can be defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Cyberbullying
is bullying that takes place using devices and equipment such as cell phone, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat and websites.

During this school year, how many times has someone from your school...

	Almost Everyday	Once or Twice a week	Once or Twice a month	Once or Twice this school year	Never
57...made fun of you, called you names, or insulted you?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
58...spread rumors about you?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
59...threatened you with harm?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
60...pushed you, shoved you, tripped you or spit on you?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
61...tried to make you do things you did not want to do, for example, give them money or other things?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
62...excluded you from activities on purpose?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
63...destroyed your property on purpose?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
64...posted hurtful information about you on the Internet, threatened or insulted you online (e.g., using email, instant messaging, text messaging, or online gaming), or purposefully excluded you from an online community?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
65...bullied you in any way?	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements. I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
66...if another student was bullying me, I would report it to a teacher or other adult at this school.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
67...if I told a teacher or other adult at this school that I was being bullied, the teacher would do something to help.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

Next, please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about your

SCHOOL. I feel like...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
68...adults at this school follow the rules and procedures.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
69...the school rules have been communicated to me clearly.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
70...adults in this school apply the same rules to all students equally.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
71...the students and teachers here try to decide together what the class rules will be.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
72...if you get in trouble in this school, you have a chance to tell your side of the story.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
73...if you break the rules, adults in this school will help you learn from your mistake.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
74...when a student gets in trouble at this school, an adult explains to them why they are getting punished.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
75...students at this school get punished equally when they break the same school rule.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I feel like...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
76...the noise level at this school makes it hard for me to learn.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
77...I get distracted from my work by other students acting out in class.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
78...students are proud of how the school looks on the outside.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
79...there is a place on the school campus where students can display trophies and awards, or post projects that they have worked on, such as poster presentations, paintings, or drawings.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
80...my school provides opportunities for me to express myself.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
81...the school grounds look like they are well-maintained.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about YOUR PLANS FOR THE

FUTURE. I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
82...I will definitely graduate from high school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
83...I will continue my education after high school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

This past school year...

	Mostly A's	Mostly B's	Mostly C's	Mostly D's	Mostly F's
84...I would describe my grades as:	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

85. Please tell us if there is anything else about your school experience that you would like to share with us. Please enter your response in the space below.

APPENDIX B

PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We want our school to be the best it can be. Please fill out this survey and tell us what you think about what we are doing well and what you think we could do better. If you have more than one child in this school, you may pick which one you want to think about when answering the questions. This survey is anonymous. No one will know which answers came from you, and it will not be possible to connect your answers to your child in any way. Thank you very much for your participation. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

Please mark how much you AGREE with the following statements about your child's school. School Environment:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel welcome at my child's school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2. The school provides a safe place for my child to learn.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3. The school encourages parents/guardians to be involved in school activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4. The principal and other office staff show respect toward parents/guardians.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5. My child's teachers listen to my concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6. The school gives me useful information about how to help my child do well at school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
7. I trust the principal at the school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8. I trust the teacher(s) at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9. I trust the office staff at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
10. The school provides my child a good education.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11. The school has adequate resources (books, computers, etc.) for my child to learn to the best of his or her abilities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12. The school informs parents/guardians about their child's progress and successes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
13. The school promotes respect for students of different races, ethnicities, religions, disabilities, and other differences.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14. My child is treated with respect by other students at school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15. My child feels like he or she is a part of the	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

school community.					
16. The school's buildings and grounds are clean and well-kept.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17. I would recommend this school to family and friends with children.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE with these statements about your child's school.

Teachers at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
18...assign the right amount of schoolwork to my child.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19...encourage my child to do his or her best.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
20...give my child positive attention when he or she does something well.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21...show respect towards parents.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE with these statements about your child's school.

School Communication:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22. I would feel comfortable contacting my child's principal.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23. I would feel comfortable contacting my child's teacher(s).	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24. I would feel comfortable contacting other school staff members regarding my child.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
25. My child's teachers are available when I need to talk to them.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
26. The school principal is available when I need to talk to him or her.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27. The school would let me know right away if there was some kind of problem with my child.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
28. The school would let me know if my child was getting low grades.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29. The school would let me know if my child had a discipline/behavior problem.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

30. The school would let me know if my child was absent from school or skipping classes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE with these statements about your child's

school. School Rules and Safety

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
31. The school has communicated to me clearly what the school rules are.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
32. The rules at this school are fair to students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
33. The principal, teachers, and other school staff apply the rules equally to all students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34. The punishments for student misbehavior are fair and appropriate.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
35. When students get in trouble, teachers give them a chance to explain their side of the story.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE with these statements about your child's school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
36. I worry about my child's safety when he or she is at school or school sponsored events.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
37. Drugs and/or alcohol are a problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
38. Student violence and/or weapons are a problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
39. Student bullying and/or harassment is a problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I think that...

	Stongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
40. ...this school has made it clear to my child what he/she should do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood) or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
41...attending school every day is important for my child to do well in his/her classes.	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

42.   Current Parent Activities. Mark the activities that you are involved in during this school year. (Mark all that apply)

1.   Helping my child with his or her homework.

2.   Checking my child's homework to make sure that he or she has completed all assignments.

3.   Meeting with the school principal or other office staff to talk about my child.

4.   Meeting with teachers to talk about my child's progress.

5.   Attending PTA meetings and events.

6.   Volunteering in school classrooms.

7.   Planning or assisting in extracurricular activities (e.g., after school programs).

8.   Volunteering at the school, not in class (e.g., school library, lunch room, tutoring)

9.   Attending school activities (e.g., sports events, plays).

10. Being a chaperone for field trips or other school events.

43. Background Information. What is your relationship to this student? (mark one.)

1.   Parent (biological or adoptive)

2.   Stepparent

3.   Grandparent

4.   Other adult relative

5.   Other guardian

44. What is your child's gender?

1. Male

2. Female

45. What is your child's grade level? (If you have more than one child in this school, select the grade level of the child you were thinking about when you completed the survey.)

   1. Kindergarten

   2. 1st

   3. 2nd

   4. 3rd

   5. 4th

   6. 5th

   7. 6th

   8. 7th

   9. 8th

   10. 9th

   11. 10th

   12. 11th

   13. 12th

46. Which of these best describes your ethnic/racial identity? (Mark all that apply.)
    1. American Indian or Alaska Native
    2. Black or African American
    3. East or Southeast Asian
    4. Hispanic or Latino
    5. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
    6. Middle Eastern
    7. White- Not Hispanic
    8. Two or More Ethnicities/Races
    9. Other _____

Please tell us if there is anything else about your school experience that you would like to share with us.

APPENDIX C

TEACHER SURVEY

Dear Teacher,

We are interested in learning more about how teachers and other school staff feel about their schools. Please be honest in your answers and tell us what you really think. The purpose of the survey is to measure the climate in schools to provide data that will promote effective and efficient allocation of resources and identify relationships between conditions for learning and academic outcomes. You responses will help us understand more about what makes school a good place to be and how changes may be made to improve it. Please note that this survey will not be used for individual evaluation purposes. This survey is confidential and no one will be able to know how you answered. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Kimberly Daubenspeck at (615) 532-0469 or at Kimberly.Daubenspeck@tn.gov. Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

This survey provides an opportunity for you to share your observations about your school environment and your perceptions about conditions for learning in your school. Please give us your first impression concerning how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each of the statements describing your school this year. Your opinions are important to us and will be used to inform school planning and improvement.

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about STUDENTS at your school.

Students at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1...care about each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
2...help each other solve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
3...are often friends with students of different races, religions, cultures, or social groups.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
4...respect each other's differences..	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
5...work well together on school projects.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
6...would feel comfortable reporting a bullying incident to a teacher or other adult.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about TEACHERS or OTHER ADULTS at your school.

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
7...get along well with their students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
8...care about their students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
9...take time to listen to what students have to	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

say.					
10...treat all students with respect.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
11...are available to help when students need them.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
12...know their students well.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about TEACHERS OR OTHER ADULTS at your school.

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
13...work together to solve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
14...try to learn from each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
15...treat each other with respect.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
16...take time to help each other when needed.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
17...trust each other.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
18...get to know each other well.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
19...feel comfortable asking for help from school administrators.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Next please mark how much you AGREE OR DISAGREE with these statements about SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS at your school.

School administrators at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20...convey clear expectations to teachers and other school staff.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
21...engage teachers and other school staff in school planning and decision making.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
22...encourage regular communication between school staff and the administration.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
23...try to help teachers and other school staff to resolve problems.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
24...show recognition for teachers and staff	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
accomplishments.					
25...provide meaningful feedback to teachers and other staff to improve instruction and learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Next, please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about TEACHERS AND OTHER ADULTS at your school.

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26...keep parents and other caregivers informed about their children's progress.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
27...take time to listen to parent and caregiver concerns.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
28...encourage all parents and caregivers to become involved in school activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
29...try to make parents feel welcome in the school environment.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
30...treat parents with respect.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
31...communicate to parents how they can support their children's learning and school success.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
32...regularly attend school sponsored events, such as school dances, sporting events, student performances, or other school activities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements about YOUR PERCEPTIONS of your school.

I feel like...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
33...this school is a good place to work.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
34...I am committed to making this school a positive place.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
35...I am a valued part of the school community.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
36...I look forward to going to school on most days.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
37...I make an important contribution to this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
38...I am safe at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS of students at your school.

Parents and caregivers of students at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
39...regularly attend school-sponsored activities and events, such as sporting events and student performances.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
40...are aware of their children's progress.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
41...are involved in their children's school life.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
42...understand school rules and policies.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements concerning how you feel about your

school. I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
43...students at this school often act out in class.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
44...the noise in the classroom or hallways often disrupts student learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
45...teachers at this school have trouble controlling behavior in their classrooms.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
46...students at this school are disrespectful to teachers and other adults.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about TEACHERS and OTHER ADULTS at your school.

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
47...are clearly informed about school policies and procedures.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
48...consistently enforce rules of conduct.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
49...apply the same rules to all students equally.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
50...give students the opportunity to explain their side of the story when they get in trouble.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
51...explain to students why they are being punished.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
52...regularly communicate expectations for student conduct.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
53...reward students for positive behavior.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
54...encourage students to think about how their actions affect others.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
55...assign consequences that help students learn from their behavior.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
56...help students develop strategies to understand and control their feelings and actions.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
57...communicate to students that bullying is unacceptable.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
58...always stop bullying when they see it.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
59...know what to say or do to intervene in a bullying situation.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
60...notice when students have trouble learning something.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
61...will try new strategies to strengthen teaching and learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

95

62...connect what students are learning to life outside the classroom.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
63....allow students to revise their work so they can learn from their mistakes.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
64...assign work that encourages student creativities and critical thinking.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
65...adjust instruction to different needs and abilities of their students.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
66...challenge all students to do their personal best.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
67...praise students for their accomplishments.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Teachers and other adults at this school...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
68...believe that all students can be successful.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
69...are committed to helping students achieve.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
70...set high expectations for learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
71...encourage all students to work hard.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
72...are concerned with preparing students for the future.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

We would also like to know how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about the PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT of your school campus.

This school campus...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
73...is clean and well maintained.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
74...has adequate facilities and classroom space to facilitate teaching and learning.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
75...provides teachers with adequate supplies and materials to support instruction.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
76...provides a welcoming place for visitors.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
77...has a location where students can display trophies and awards to celebrate their	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

accomplishments.					
78...provides a safe place for students to learn.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

For the final set of questions, we would like you to share your perceptions about some of the problems facing students in your school setting and the adequacy of resources available to provide students with support. For each of the following questions, please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with each statement.

I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
79...alcohol or drug use while at school or school sponsored events is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
80...physical fighting among students is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
81...gangs or gang-related activity is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
82...bullying (e.g. physical, verbal, and/or social bullying) is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
83...cyberbullying is a frequent problem among students at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

I think that...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
84...racial/ethnic tension or discrimination among students is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
85...truancy is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
86...theft, vandalism, or other property damage is a frequent problem at this school.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

The programs and resources at this school are adequate to...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
87...provide all students with quality instruction.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
88...provide instructional supports to students who are struggling academically.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Disagree Nor Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
89...provide interventions and supports to students with behavioral challenges.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
90...address student mental health needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
91...address students' substance use prevention and intervention needs.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
92...promote students' physical health and nutrition.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
93...maintain campus safety and security.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
94...support students with special needs or disabilities.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
95...address the professional development needs of school staff.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

Please mark how much you AGREE or DISAGREE with these statements about Emergency Readiness/Management at your school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
96...I know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado or flood) or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
97...This school has a written plan that clearly describes procedures to be performed in shootings.	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
98...This school has a written plan that clearly describes procedures to be performed in natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tornadoes).	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏
99...This school or school district provides effective training in safety procedures to staff (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills).	❏	❏	❏	❏	❏

100.   Students are considered chronically absent if they miss 10 percent or more of school for any reason (including both excused and unexcused absences). Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

Chronic Absenteeism is a problem at my school.
1. Strongly Agree

2. Agree

3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree

4. Disagree

5. Strongly Disagree

What is your information at this school?
1. Teacher

2. Paraprofessional, teacher assistant, instructional aide

3. Student support staff

4. Other _____

How many years have you worked in this position at any place of employment?
1. 1 year or less

2. 2-3 years

3. 4-6 years

4. 7-10 years

5. 11-19 years

6. 20 years or more

How many years have you been employed at this school?
1. 1 year or less

2. 2-3 years

3. 4-6 years

4. 7-10 years

5. 11-19 years

6. 20 years or more

What is your gender?
1. Male

2. Female

What is your race or ethnic origin (Please check all that apply)?
1. African American

2. Native American

3. Asian or Pacific Islander

4. White

5. Hispanic

6. Other _____

What grade level do you teach (if applicable, please check all that apply)?
1. Kindergarten

2. 1st grade

3. 2nd grade

4. 3rd grade

5. 4th grade

6. 5th grade

7. 6th grade

8. 7th grade

9. 8th grade

10. 9th grade

11. 10th grade

12. 11th grade

13. 12th grade

14. Not applicable

Do you provide instruction or other support services to any of the following types of students (Check all that apply)?
1. Special education

2. Gifted or talented education

3. English language learners

4. Migrant education

Please tell us if there is anything else about your school experience that you would like to share with us.

VITA

JAMES A. JACOBS

Education

Doctor of Education – Educational Leadership
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee
December 2018

Educational Specialist – Curriculum and Instruction
Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee
December 2009

Masters of Education – Administration and Supervision
Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate, Tennessee
December 2005

Professional Experience

Principal
Johnson City Schools, Johnson City, Tennessee
July 2014 – Present

Principal
Kingsport City Schools, Kingsport, Tennessee
July 2010 – June 2013

Associate Principal
Kingsport City Schools, Kingsport, Tennessee
July 2009 – June 2010

Principal
Elizabethton City Schools, Elizabethton, Tennessee
July 2007 – June 2009

General Education Teacher
Elizabethton City Schools, Elizabethton, Tennessee
August 1997 – June 2007