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TALK
ABOUT
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Quality Counts:
Involving Students
in School Climate

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Staff writer, *Education Week*

Quality Counts: Involving Students in School Climate

Expert Presenters:

Bennett Lieberman, principal, Central Park East High School, New York

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An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.

In East Harlem they call it a "Hot Mess"

Culture = Chaos

The First Three Years

Triage

The Second Three Years

Malica's Story

Years Seven and Eight

Finally Some Positive Student Survey Responses!

CENTRAL PARK EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Building a Healthy School Culture

Programs Equal Opportunity

College Summit	Mindset Works
Peer Group Connection	School Connect
Girls, Inc	The Pride Sports Program
East Harlem Tutorial Program	College Now @ BMCC
Step-Up	Mt. Sinai Internship Program
Project Roseau	Revolution Prep
Minds Matter	College Access Research & Action
Opportunity Network	Young Audiences of NY
Advanced Placement Classes	CB SpringBoard Classes
Double Discovery	Students for Educational Opportunity
Expanded Success Initiative	Harlem Football Company

Current Student Outcomes

Graduation Rate – 85.6% (2011)

Attendance – 94.6% (2012)

Applications / Enrollment – 3100 (2013)

Post-Secondary Readiness – 37.1%

Post-Secondary Enrollment – 58.1%

AP & Honors / College Classes – 413 Seats

2011Scholarship Dollars – 1 Million +

FASFA Completion – 100%

College Application Completion – 100%

Persistence

Talk About It®

Anonymous Communication Service

- Launched in 2005; serves hundreds of thousands of students in K12 as well as mental health services and the US military

- **Anonymous text messaging & online messaging**; meets students where they are

- Breaks 'code of silence' about bullying & other issues

- Secure and web-based
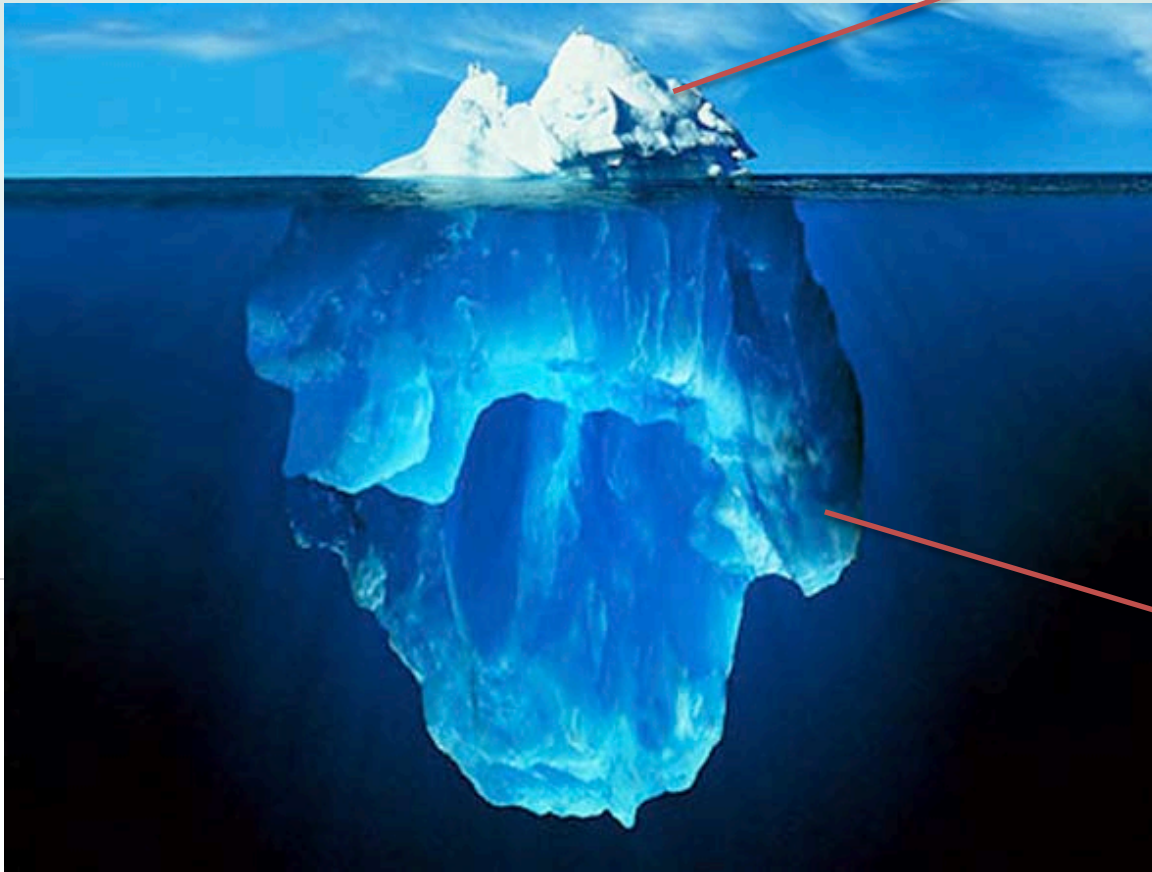
What is School Climate?
(Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009)

The quality and character of school life …

based on patterns of people's experiences of school life

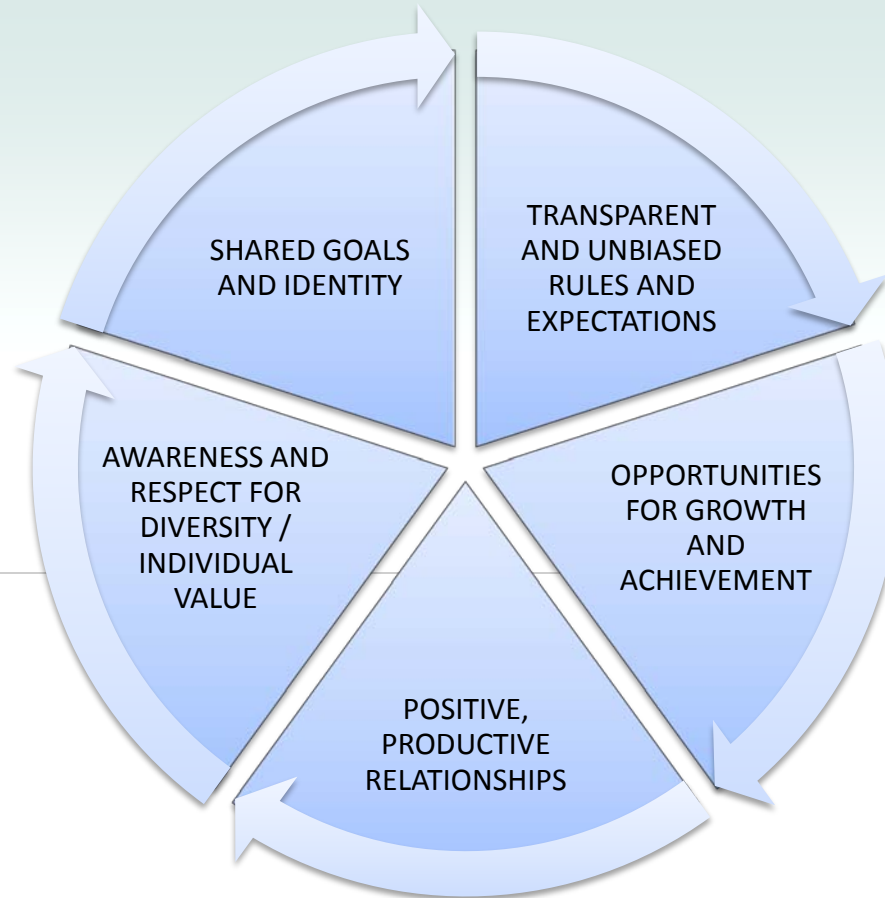…reflects NORMS, GOALS, VALUES, interpersonal relationships,

teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational

structures.

Programs & Curricula

Norms & Values expressed in **day-to-day experiences**

What norms create positive school climates? (O'MALLEY & EKLUND, *2012*)

Why School Climate?

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

- School Motivation and Connectedness
- Attendance & School Completion
- Scores on measures of academic achievement—including tests in language, reading, and math, and overall grade-point-average
- Feelings of safety at school
- Willingness to report potential threats to safety
- REDUCED alcohol and other drug use

IMPACT ON STAFF

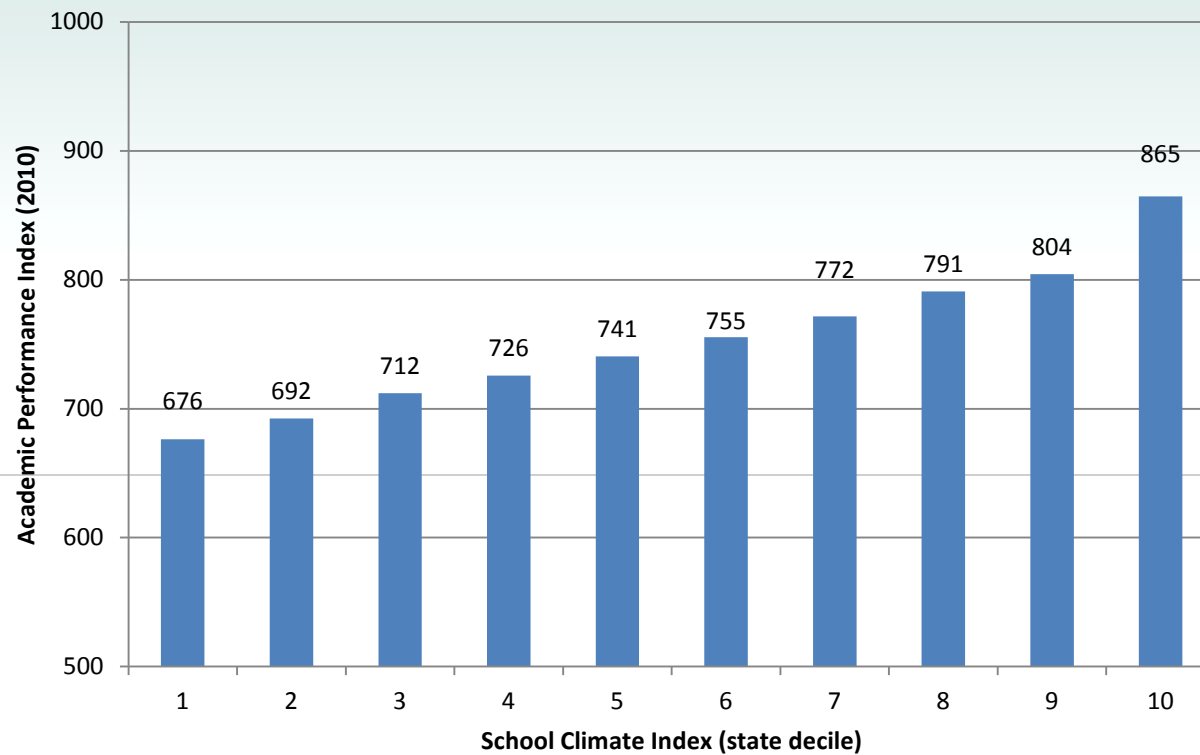- Greater implementation fidelity of new curricula and interventions

- Decreased reports of teacher burnout

- Greater levels of teacher job satisfaction

- Intention to stay in the teaching profession

- Increased teacher retention

IMPACT ON SCHOOL

- Reduced discipline referrals and school suspensions

- Improved Academic Performance Index (API)

SCHOOL CLIMATE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
(Hanson, 2012)

Local Community

School

Classroom

Student Behavior

Physical Resources (e.g., parks, playgrounds, youth-oriented centers)

Social Resources

Socio-political Context

(e.g., relationships with personnel in local government, community-based organizations, religious-affiliated groups)

Discipline Policies

Teacher-Student Relationships

Social Norms

Physical Space Characteristics

Physical Space Characteristics

Social Norms

Peer Relationships

Intra-Staff Relationships

Local School Funding Policies

Social Norms

The Student Listening Circle: Purpose

Models healthy communication skills, such as active listening and solution-oriented dialogue

+

Promotes positive norms around relationship building, respect for diverse opinions and ideas

+

Promotes a shared school identity and investment in shared school improvement goals

= BUILDS POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

The Student Listening Circle: A four-phase process

1. Orientation for All Participants

1. Preparation of Participant Groups
   - Students
   - Adults

1. Student Listening Circle

1. Reflection and Solution Planning

QUESTIONS STUDENTS ANSWER

1. How do you know when an adult in your school CARES about you?

2. How do you know when an adult in your school BELIEVES in you?

3. What makes your classes engaging or interesting to you?

4. What kinds of things could you do at your school that would make a difference?

5. If you could change or improve one thing in this school, what would it be?

Listening Out Loud: Themes from SLCs(O'Malley, Voight, & Izu, 2012)

» 58 SLCs conducted in S3 grantee comprehensive high schools throughout California in winter of 2011

» Student response cards collected in 36 sites, deidentified and responses entered into database.

» Ten schools selected through a stratified randomization process that ensured representation of urban, suburban, and rural schools (as defined by the California State Department of Education).

» Responses first coded by each author independently and then again after reaching consensus about theme labels across authors

Question 1 & Question 2 : How do you know when a teacher cares about/ believes in you?

1. Attention to the Personal Connection

2. Commitment to Student Learning

3. Expectations for Behavior and Success

4. Encouragement and Motivation to Succeed

Question 3: What makes your classes engaging or interesting to you?

1. Variety in Instructional Techniques

1. Teacher Attitudes & Behaviors

1. Opportunities for Expression & Self-Direction

2. Real-World Applications

Question 4: If you could change or improve one thing in this school, what would it be?

1. Physical Environment & Resources

1. Staff-Student Rapport

1. Student Peer Relationships

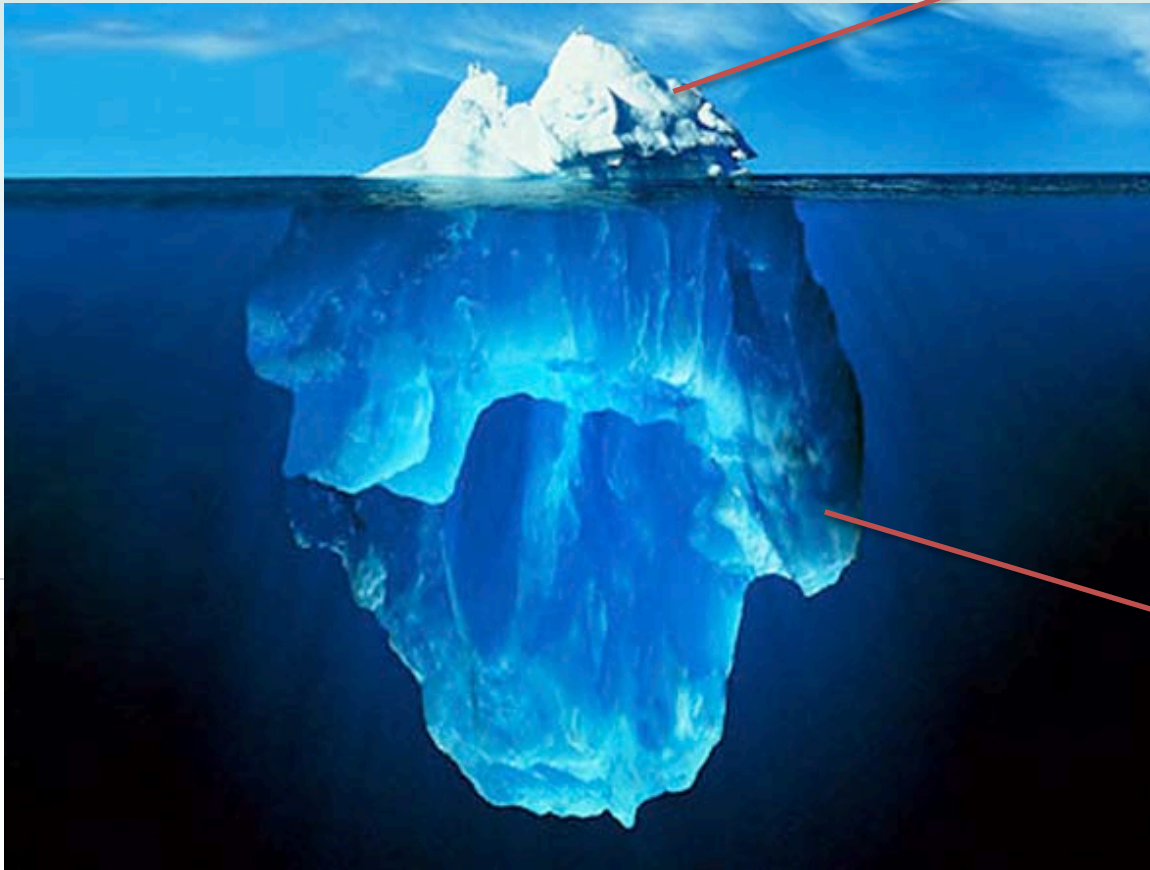1. School Rules and Policies

Question 5: What could you do at your school that would make a difference?

      1. Pro-social Peer Interactions

      1. Positive Norm-Encouraging Behavior

      2. Community Events, Activities

Programs &
Curricula

Norms & Values
expressed in **day-to-day experiences**

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Citations

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Slide 7: Impact on Staff

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Slide 8: Impact on School

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   intervention. *American Journal of Community Psychology, 40,* 250–260. doi:10.1007/s10464-007-
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Slide 9: School Climate & Academic Performance

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Slides 19-23: Listening Out Loud: Themes from SLCs

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Since 2005…
What ARE the Top 10 Issues students want to Talk about?

Top 10 Issues Talked About

1. Bullying / Cyberbullying
2. Stress
3. Family Problems
4. Depression
5. Fighting
6. Peer Pressure
7. Drugs
8. Cutting / Self-Injury
9. Cheating on Schoolwork
10. Sexual Harassment

TALK
ABOUT
IT
ANONYMOUS HELP

Most Messages Sent From

1. 8th Graders
2. 7th Graders
3. 6th Graders
4. 9th Graders

TALK
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HELP

How do we reach students today?

- 72% of all teens (88% of teen cell phone users) are texters
- 1 in 3 teens sends 100 + texts/day

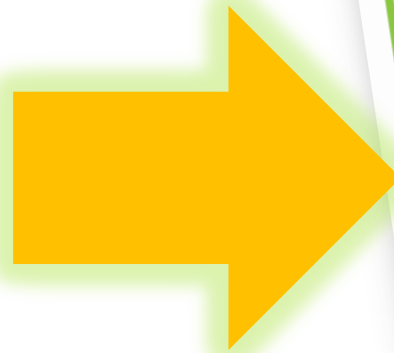Source: Teens and Mobile Phones report dated April 20, 2010

Get the Whitepaper

Creating a Culture of Dialogue

(Practical steps, funding resources, more)

Free download:

talk.schoolmessenger.com

*How **Talk About It** helps*

Faculty **meet students where they are** – online and with text messaging – to help solve issues.

By **reducing the stigma** of communicating with trusted adults, the service allows students to open up and **break the code of silence**.
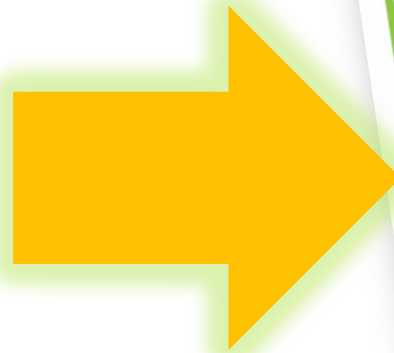
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talk.schoolmessenger.com

Creating a Culture of Dialogue:
Practical Steps for Better Communication and Safer Schools

Challenges such as bullying and sexual harassment continue to impact safety on school campuses—yet overall, students do not feel comfortable reporting these incidents to adults who can help them. Students fear reprisals from their peers, or are embarrassed to talk to counselors about problems like self-harm or depression. Existing communications solutions lack the anonymity students need, or do not provide tools that students are comfortable using. Providing an opportunity for students to have a dialogue with adults, on the subjects of school safety and personal issues, involves the students in creating a safe and honest campus.

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