School Climate: A Whole Child Intervention That Reduces Academic Risk

Presented By:
Megan L. Smith, PhD, Shay M. Daily, MPH, MCHES, Sabena Thomas, MA, Alfgeir L. Kristjansson, PhD, & Michael J. Mann, PhD
Introduction

**Background**
Students whose developmental needs are being met within a pro-social settings are less likely to participate in health behaviors related to academic failure.¹

**Knowledge gap**
Research using school climate as an indicator of pro-social behaviors in schools is scarce.²
Introduction

**Study purpose**
The purpose of this study was to examine school climate as an indicator of meeting students’ developmental needs and reduce risk factors related to academic failure.

**School Climate (SC)**
SC represents the environmental atmosphere of the school that includes the norms, values, practices, and relationships within a school setting.\(^2,^3\)
Assessment

Dependent Measures

Substance Use (3 – items)
• Log natural of the sum score of alcohol & tobacco use
• Ex: During the past 12 months, how often have you smoked cigarettes?

Number of Sexual Partners (1 – item)
• Ex: How many people have you ever had sexual intercourse?

Academic Achievement (2 – items)
• Self-reported grades in Math and English
Assessment

School Climate Measure

42-item ordinal scale
Student-Teacher Relationships (8-items, $\alpha = 0.92$)
Order and Safety (6-items, $\alpha = 0.89$)
Student Engagement (6-items, $\alpha = 0.88$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Style Scale</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to talk to teachers</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☑</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

Basic Psychological Needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000)

21-item ordinal scale ($\alpha = 0.98$)

Autonomy
Relatedness
Competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likert Style Scale</th>
<th>1 Not at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 Somewhat true</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Very true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel pressured in my life.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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</table>
Design

Participants

Students from 2 high schools and 3 middle schools in West Virginia completed a school-based survey

Public school students:
• 2,405, 43% female, 89% non-Hispanic White, response rate 70%

Statistical Analyses

Structural Equation Modeling was used to assess relationships between study variables
Findings – Student Achievement

Model Fit Statistics: CFI=.96, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.03

Note: Only hypothesized significant effects are displayed
Findings - Substance Use

Model Fit Statistics: CFI=.96, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.03

- Student-Teacher Relationships
- Order & Discipline
- Student Engagement
- Student Psychological Needs
- Substance Use

Note: Only hypothesized significant effects are displayed
Findings – Number of Sexual Partners

Model Fit Statistics: CFI=.96, RMSEA=.04, SRMR=.03

Note: Only hypothesized significant effects are displayed
School climate can be a positive pro-social way of meeting the developmental needs of students.

School Climate can also relate to positive outcomes and basic psychological needs.
Student outcomes are affected by several context-specific, non-academic factors within a complex social-environment.

When schools operate in ways that meet the needs of students there less of need to integrate specific or multiple interventions as most the “work” is already being done.
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References


