

INTEGRATED APPROACH TO CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT, SEL, AND EQUITY



Overview

As educators, we all strive to inspire and help prepare youth to succeed in work and in life. But even with the best of intentions, recent events have shined the light on flawed systems that rob many of equitable access to opportunities. Yet, out of the ashes of the heartache and disappointment that we, as a society, have endured, particularly over the past year, a glimmer of hope can be seen – hope that we can now openly address issues of race, gender, and class in a meaningful way.

Many districts are embarking on transformational efforts focused on equity and anti-racism. Others are at a crossroads because they have already begun work on school climate improvement or social emotional learning and fear that abandoning those efforts for a new one may lead to staff frustration and “initiative fatigue.” At the School Culture and Climate Initiative (Initiative), we recognize that school climate improvement, social emotional learning and educational equity are interdependent and not competing interests that require prioritizing one over the others. When we focus on developing the SEL skills of adults and students, school climate improves, and we begin the journey towards a more equitable learning environment.

As such, the Initiative has developed a unique integrated approach that weaves these efforts together through a trauma-informed lens. By leveraging existing efforts and creating alignment, we reduce redundancy and ensure that resources are used wisely, time is expended in the most efficient manner and services and supports are comprehensive and streamlined. We strive to empower staff and build capacity so that improvements are not only systemic but also sustainable.



Services and Supports

With our integrated approach, an Initiative consultant with expertise in school climate improvement and SEL is assigned to the district. In addition to guiding the district through the School Climate Assessment and Improvement Process, the consultant also oversees all related efforts and programming. In the event that external service providers are needed, the Initiative taps into a vast network of qualified providers and seamlessly coordinates new and existing services.

The integrated approach includes but is not limited to:

- The three-year School Climate Assessment and Improvement Process (SCAIP) which includes the collection and analysis of school climate as well as equity-related data
- Ongoing professional development (PD) on SEL, anti-racism and equity issues (additional topics available)
- SEL teacher coaching for more individualized guidance and reinforcement of concepts introduced during PD
- Networking and support through the Initiative's many professional learning communities
- Mental Health First Aid® Training

Customized packages can also be co-created to meet a district's needs.

Outcomes from an Integrated Approach

Districts that focus on school climate improvement, social emotional learning and equity with fidelity have experienced the following:

- A school environment where students and staff feel safe and supported as demonstrated by significant increases in positive ratings on school climate surveys
- Reduced disciplinary infractions, absenteeism, aggressive behavior, and emotional distress
- Increased student feelings of belonging and connection with the school
- Increases in staff morale, perception of leadership support, and overall job satisfaction
- Increased engagement and school pride amongst students, staff, parents and the wider community



WHY PARTNER WITH THE INITIATIVE

The Initiative is recognized nationally as a model that brings about sustainable change in schools and positively impacts the lives of students and their families.

- Over 400 individual schools and organizations served since inception
- Approximately 12,000 hours of professional development provided to educators
- Nationally recognized as a Promising Practice by Character.org
- Recipient of The John Kalafat Community Program Award from the American Psychological Association

For questions about the Initiative and our signature integrated approach, please contact [Liz Warner](#), Co-Director of the School Culture and Climate Initiative.