Understanding the Counselor’s Role in Building School Morale

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### School Climate

*School Climate Domain* | Score  
---|---  
Student Response (Georgia Student Health Survey II) | 79.267  
Teacher/Staff/Administrator Response (Georgia School Personnel Survey) | 92.050

- School Connectedness
- Structure Learning
- School Safety
- Physical Environment
- Peer & Adult Relations
- Parent Involvement
Causes of Low Morale

• Student-Related Problems

• Academic Instruction & Curriculum

• Lack of Support

• Administrative Issues

• Relationship Problems

(Perumal, Magendri, 2011)
Student-Related Problems

- Poor discipline
  - Laziness
  - Lack of work ethics
- Disrespect of teachers and school rules
  - Tardiness
  - High absenteeism
FOR THE EDUCATOR

- Email words of encouragement or wisdom to a teacher (especially after a tough situation)
- Teacher Grams from students
- Counselor or Administrator have a “Come to Your Senses” meeting with student

FOR THE STUDENTS

- Positive Calls Home
- Positive Behavior Referral
- Student Recognition
- Test Exemption
- PBIS
Supportive Behaviors

• Showing respect
• “Being there” for students and frequent contact
• Active listening
• One-on-one communication
• Encouraging students to express opinions
• Avoiding “put-downs”
• Writing encouraging notes
• Students praising peers
• Displaying students’ work
• Identifying unique talents and strengths
• Exhibiting enthusiasm
• Using positive humor
• Serving as a role model
• Celebrating accomplishments

• State clearly and explicitly what students need to do to receive an “A” in your course.
• Get to class early and talk with your students about what they are doing in school, what they hope to learn, and what they are really enjoying.
• Find simple ways (a comment to the class, a remark to a student after class, an e-mail) to recognize student contributions and excellent work.
• Give students examples of ways in which class concepts relate to “real world” matters.
Student Incentive Resources

- **Elementary Related Non-Food Incentives and Rewards**
- **Incentive Ideas** (addresses classroom management incentives)
- **Secondary Reward Strategies**
- **Attendance Incentives**
- **Behavioral Intervention Incentives**
Academic Instruction & Curriculum

- Teachers complained that the focus is mainly academic & not holistic
- Maintenance of records and assessment tasks is time-consuming
  - Drop in pass requirements lowers standards
  - Lack of professional development and collaboration
• Small learning communities
• Alternative scheduling
• Team teaching
• Teaching continuity (school closed)
• School-based enterprises
• Professional learning communities
• Spread the Love/Piece of the Pie
• Advisement Program
• Pre-populated testing labels

• Bubbling Party
• Pre-Label Day
• Support Staff assistance with maintenance of records
• Time, Time, Time
  • Movie Time
  • In Service Days
• All teachers need a mentor
• Professional Learning topics related to academic success for students (rigor), social-emotional needs (relationships), and career planning based on content being discussed (relevance)
Lack of Support

• Inadequate support from administrators, peers, department chairs, parents and community
  • Few incentives for teachers
  • Little improvement in classroom management skills
• Teacher Lottery: Name drawn and an administrator spends a day (or half-day) assisting the staff member whose name was drawn.

• For an anticipated “P-T Conference Gone Wrong” have an administrator sit in on conference.

• I like it when... (sentence starters)

• Administrator writes a one day or one week lesson plans for a teacher

• Kidnap-a-Class

• Get a donation of a shopping cart to keep at the school for adults bringing in huge loads of supplies

• During morning announcements, highlight something that an adult in the building did and tell why
Structured Initiatives

• Social activities to start the year
• Team building
• Mentoring
• Rewards, recognition, incentives
• Student advocacy
• Advisory programs
• Peer mediation

• Students as teachers
• Character education
• Parent partnerships
• Business-community partnerships
• Service learning/community service
• Extracurricular and co-curricular activities
Employee Attendance Recognition (EAR) Program

• A letter of commendation from the principal for their personnel file
• # days/weeks of casual dress
• Certain # of days of early work leave
• A $$ supply order
• # Days of exemption from bus and/or lunch duty
• Gift Card
• Exemption from # afterschool activity or evening “special” events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Wide Attendance</th>
<th>School Wide Attendance Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Student Attendance</td>
<td>97.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Teacher Attendance</td>
<td>96.696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Administrator Attendance</td>
<td>99.920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Staff Attendance</td>
<td>96.053</td>
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</tbody>
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School Climate
Teacher at the beginning of the school year

Teacher at the end of the school year
Administrative Issues

- Large class sizes
- Salaries
- Nepotism and lack of merit in the appointment to leadership posts
- Inequity in teaching loads between administrators and staff
• Job Shadowing/Job Swap
• Spread the Love/Piece of the Pie
• Professional Learning on informal assessment strategies
• Students write letter to teacher about their learning, their accomplishments, challenges, and interests
• Assign students’ jobs to assist with management tasks
• Collaborative Grouping reduced to “elbow partners”
• Gift Cards for recognition
• Professional Learning that comes with a stipend (summer or weekends)
Relationship Problems

- Professional jealousy
- Apathy of colleagues
- Lack of unity amongst educators
• Have a “So You Think You Know the Faculty?” game where each faculty member writes 1 or 2 fun facts about themselves and others have to guess!
• Grade Level mini Olympic events......a competition between the staff of the grade levels or departments at your school
• Create a V.I.P (Valued Instructor Parking) space in your parking lot right up front!
• Staff Retreat (start with select groups)

• “Mascot” Appreciation Cards
• Exercise Class afterschool
• Coffee & Pastry Carts
• Have a "did you fill someone's bucket" board where staff can write affirmations for each other.
• Hobby/Interest Activity
• Social Outings
• Milestone Years of Service (1, 5, 10, etc.)
• Faculty E-Newsletter to include kudos, trivia, staff events
• Fresh Fruit
• Ice Cream Sundae Party
• Themed Sweets
  • STRESSED spelled backwards is DESSERTS
• Morning Treats the week of or week after testing
• Luau (We’re going to Hawaii!!)
• Catered Lunches (PTA)
• Grill Out on in-service & pre/post planning days
• Family Fun Day (for faculty/staff)
• Tailgate before home football game
• SOUPer Bowl
  • 2/5/17 in Houston, TX

If you don’t feed the teachers, they’ll eat the students.

• Local parlors send in masseuses to provide 10 minute massages
• Faculty signs up in advance
• December and May
POINTS TO CONSIDER
• Emergency contact sheet that asks if you can recognize their birthday
• Don’t emphasize a person’s age
• Consider those who may not celebrate birthdays
• Staff Birthdate in Student Info System
• Don’t be inconsistent
  • May/June & July/August
  • Weekends & Holidays

NOTEWORTHY IDEAS
• Birthday Card on special day
• Group Monthly Birthday Party
• Balloon/Sign on their door
• Birthday Relief
• Lunch with the principal
• Administrator calls each employee
Teachers be like.......  

1st Day of School  
October thru April  
Last Day of School
Potential Fundraiser to Fund Your Program

- A faculty dodgeball or basketball game against the students OR parents
- Chili Cookoff: $1 for a taste test or $3 for a bowl
- Bakeoff: $1 for a slice or single serving
- Hat Day
- Dress for a Cause (jeans day)

- Dollars for Dreams (supports Care Team)
- Dollars for Scholars (can support funds students may need for certain school sponsored events (i.e. field trips)
- Celebrity Autograph & Item Auction
- Dining for Success
To register, click the webinar’s title.

**Feb. 17:**
New Middle School Counselors
Academic Achievement Initiatives
11:00 AM

**Feb. 17:**
New Elem Counselors
Using Art in Your School Counseling Program
2:00 PM

**Feb. 24:**
Middle School Counselors
Empower & Inspire to Avoid the Drama
11:00 AM

**Feb. 24:**
New High School Counselors
College Entrance Exams Resources for Your Students
2:00 PM
The End