

Advancing School Leadership for Continuous Improvement

Take A Pulse Check: Ways to Create a Positive Climate & Culture

**Winter Instructional Leadership Conference
February 25-26, 2020**

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Session Norms

- Place electronics on silence/vibrate.
- Remain engaged in learning.
- Respectfully share opinions.
- Ask questions for clarification to avoid making assumptions.

Session Goals

- Provide a definition of school climate and why school climate is important in dropout prevention.
- Define and discuss 12 dimensions of school climate
- Provide some individual and team based strategies for improving school climate.
- Provide additional resources to enhance knowledge about and measurement of school climate.

Opening Activity Brain Games



An Introduction: The Importance of School Climate

- Over the last two decades, there has been a growing appreciation that school climate, the quality, and character of school life, fosters – or undermines – children’s development, learning, and achievement.
- Research confirms what teachers and parents have claimed for decades:

A safe and supportive school environment, in which students have positive social relationships and are respected, engaged in their work, and feel competent, matters.

What is School Climate?

Why Is It Important?

- School climate refers to the quality and character of school life as it relates to norms and values, interpersonal relations and social interactions, and organizational processes and structures.
- School climate sets the tone for all the learning and teaching done in the school environment and, as research proves, it is predictive of students' ability to learn and develop in healthy ways.
- Further, research proves that a positive school climate directly impacts important indicators of success such as increased teacher retention, lower dropout rates, decreased incidences of violence, and higher student achievement.

The Center For Social and Emotional Education

What Are the Essential Dimensions of School Climate?

- Extensive research outlines 12 dimensions that most comprehensively color and shape our perception of school climate.
 - These dimensions are divided into four major categories of safety, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships and the institutional environment.

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Dimensions of School Climate

Safety

Rules and Norms: Clearly communicated rules about physical violence and verbal abuse and clear, consistent enforcement.

Physical Safety: Sense that students and adults feel safe from physical harm in the school.

Social and emotional security: Sense that students feel safe from verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion.

Teaching and Learning

Support for learning: Supportive teaching practices such as constructive feedback and encouragement for positive risk taking, academic challenge, individual attention, and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and skills in a variety of ways.

Social and civic learning: Support for the development of social and civic knowledge and skills, including effective listening, conflict resolution, reflection and responsibility, and ethical decision making.

Dimensions of School Climate

Interpersonal Relationships

Respect for diversity: Mutual respect for individual differences at all levels of the school – student-student, adult-students, and adult-adult.
Social support – adults: Collaborative and trusting relationships among adults and adult support for students in terms of high expectations for success, willingness to listen, and personal concern.
Social support – students: Network of peer relationships for academic and personal support.

Teaching and Learning

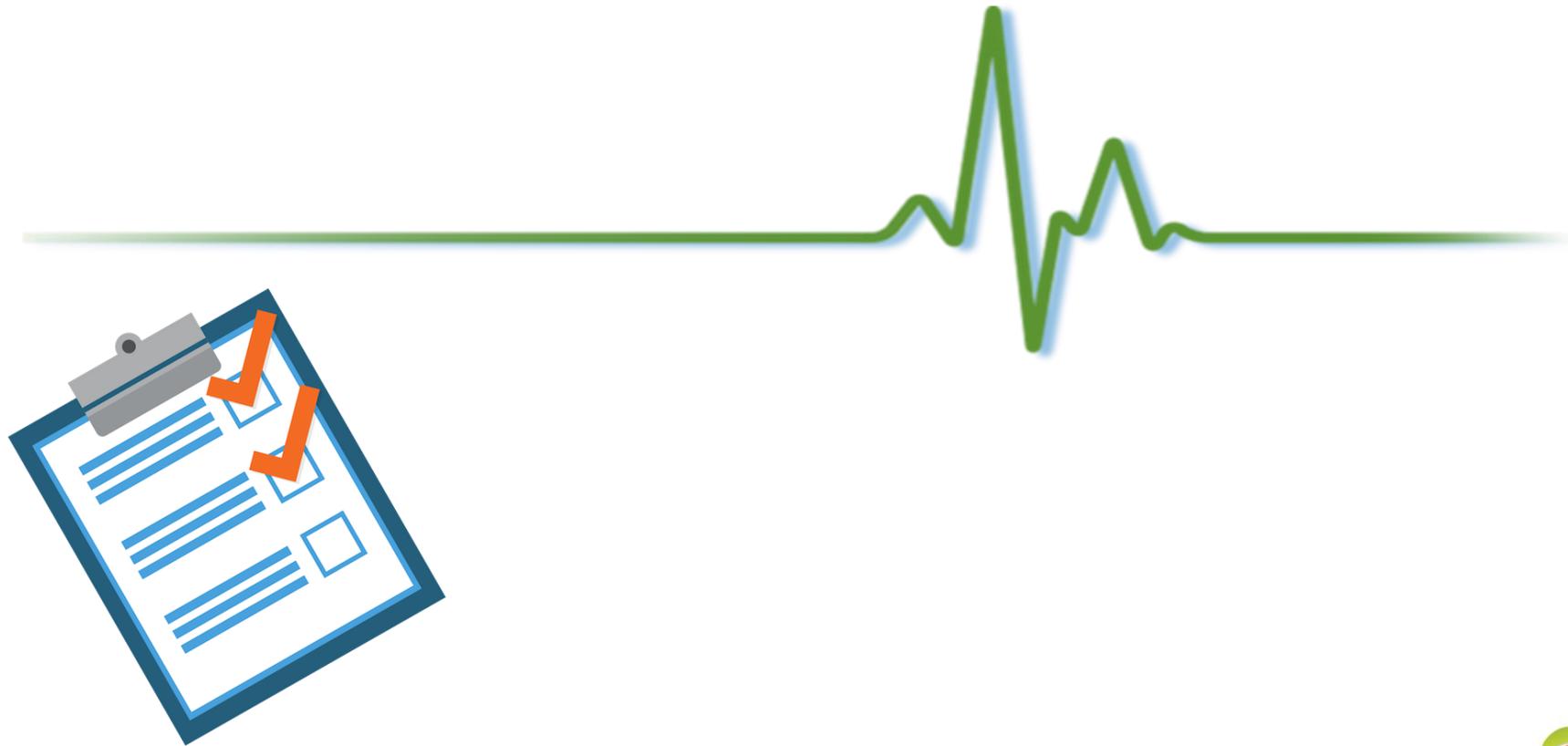
School connectedness/engagement: Positive identification with the school, a sense of belonging, and norms for broad participation in school life for students and families.
Physical surroundings: Cleanliness, order, and appeal of facilities and adequate resources and materials.

Why Measure School Climate?

Measuring your school climate is the first step toward **improving** your school climate and academic achievement.



Pulse Check Activity: Climate Survey



Measuring School Climate

- Importance of understanding perceptions of school experience through the eyes of:
 - Students
 - Teachers
 - Parents
- Issues of safety and social relationships
- Conducive environment for working/learning
- Experiences in the classroom
- Survey Findings



Measuring school climate and using these findings to build community and further learning and positive youth development will — literally — make a difference for the future of America: our children.

Universally Students Must ...

- Feel physically safe.
- Feel social and emotional security.
- Believe they are supported in their learning and goals (both short & long term).
- Believe their social and civic learning and activities are imported and supported.
- Believe they are respected, trusted, and connected to the adults and the learning environment.



Essentials of School Culture

- Focus on reflection
- Democratic governance
- Clear policies and expectations for behavior
- Student leadership
- Respect and caring
- Diversity recognized and celebrated
- Inter-grade & across-grade student groupings
- Pick Me Ups (formal time to start each day as a community)
- Rituals (e.g. new student orientation; International Night; alumni reunions; etc.)
- Students are comfortable talking with adults about academic and personal issues
- High attendance, graduation, and college acceptance rates
- Low dropout rate
- Emphasis on professional development/life-long learning for staff members
- Fun!



Establish Structure

- Mission
- Vision
- Transparency
- Expectations
- Establish Decision Making Policies
- Common Knowledge
- Staff Development
- Shared Goals
- Evaluation

Mission and Vision Statements

- A mission statement explains why your school exists.
- The “why” is the guiding purpose of all you do.

Suggestion

- A school’s mission is to teach (and promote learning).

- A vision statement must explain (in detail) what your learning community hopes to achieve.

Suggestion

- Break down your vision by the week, month, year, multiyear.
- Communicate it often.

Teach and Establish a Work Ethic

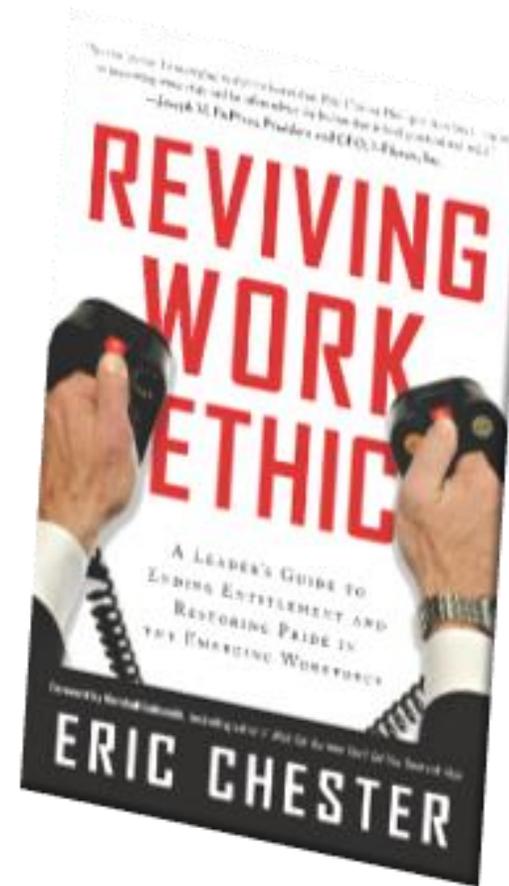
Do what you say you will do
when you said you would do it.

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then is not an act,
but a habit.

- Aristotle

District/Principal Professional Work Ethic Virtues

1. Attitude
2. Common Sense
3. Competence
4. Gratitude
5. Initiative
6. Integrity
7. Perseverance
8. Professionalism
9. Reliability
10. Respect



Teach Common Expectations

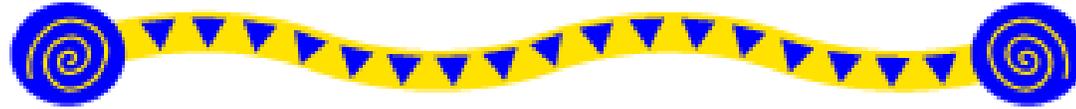
- Students (and staff) know exactly what is expected.
- Students know what will happen if they cross over the line.
- Students understand the meaning of consequences.
- Energy, enthusiasm, and dedication are pervasive.
- Teachers supervise every inch of instructional space.
- Student-teacher interactions are fair, firm and consistent.
- Pride is observable.

From [Newell, \(2012\) Classroom Management in the Music Room](#)

School
connectedness
is a powerful
predictor of
adolescent health
and academic
outcomes.



Teach How to Make a Line



- Students (and staff) know exactly what is expected
- Practice makes perfect
- Practice makes improvement
- Stand behind the next student
- All bodies, heads, and eyes face forward
- Keep in personal space
- No talking

Teach Hallway Movements



- No student talking, only teacher voice for directions.
- Keep to the right in halls and on stairs.
- Do not disrupt instruction in other classrooms.
- Keep hands off student work on walls.
- Consider it a challenge to be the best managed class in the school while moving in lines.

In an Effective School, There Are Five Major Reasons for Office Referrals

- Personal injury
- Cheating
- Illegal or illicit behavior (stealing, drugs, etc.)
- Danger or threat to other students or adults
- Overt refusal to follow a staff member's direction



Rationale for School-Wide Student Management and Code of Conduct

- Schools must be safe and productive.
- Schools must create a climate with a high expectancy of student success.
- Students must be motivated and engaged.
- Staff must be guided to prevent problems and to view those that do occur as “*opportunities for teaching*”.



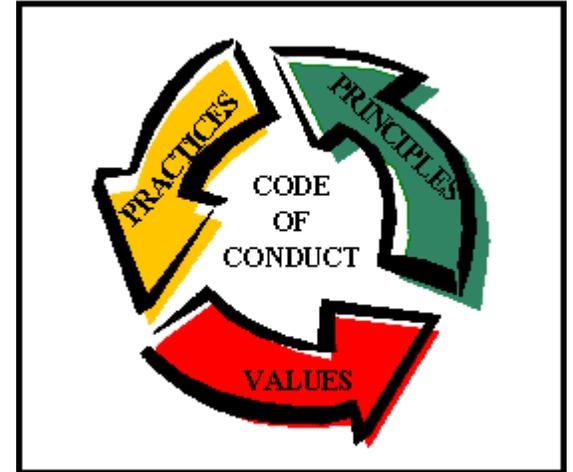
District Process to Support Code of Conduct

- Discipline Plan
- Sandy Hook Promise (See Something/Say Something)
- SRO
- SSO
- District Safety Team
- Behavior intervention Specialist



Sample Code of Conduct

- **W**ork for Quality
- **E**arn Respect
- **S**afety First
- **T**reat Others Kindly



Modify to fit your needs

Suggestion - Keep a code simple and easy to recite

The Principal Sets the Tone in Establishing School Culture

- Be visible.
- Choose a positive attitude.
- Identify patterns of behavior (students and staff).
- Don't procrastinate; address problems.
- Empower staff to be the disciplinarians.
- Keep the “Monkeys off Your Back”.
- Gather good ideas from other schools.
- Look professional.

Feedback is Essential in School Culture

- Oral feedback is more effective than written.
- Quality feedback is needed, not more feedback.
- Much of the feedback provided by the teacher to the student is not valued and not acted on.
- The most powerful feedback is provided from the student to the teacher and or to peers.

“The most powerful single influence enhancing achievement is feedback.”

Behavior Strategies

- Power Seeking Behavior
 - Power-seeking students attempt to provoke teachers into a struggle of wills.
 - In most cases, the teacher should direct attention to other members of the class.

Behavior: Rambling -- wandering around and off the subject. Using far-fetched examples or analogies.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Refocus attention by restating relevant point.
- Direct questions to group that is back on the subject.
- Ask how topic relates to current topic being discussed.
- Use visual aids, begin to write on board, turn on media projector.
- Say: "Would you summarize your main point please?" or "Are you asking...?"

Behavior: Shyness or silence -- Lack of Participation

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Refocus attention by restating relevant point.
- Direct questions to group that is back on the subject
- Ask how topic relates to current topic being discussed.
- Use visual aids, begin to write on board, turn on media projector.
- Say: "Would you summarize your main point please?" or "Are you asking...?"

Behavior: Talkativeness -- knowing everything, manipulation, chronic whining

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Acknowledge comments made.
- Give limited time to express viewpoint or feelings, and then move on.
- Make eye contact with another participant and move toward that person.
- Give the person individual attention during breaks.
- Say: "That's an interesting point. Now let's see what other people think."

Behavior: Sharpshooting -- trying to shoot you down or trip you up

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Admit that you do not know the answer and redirect the question the group or the individual who asked it.
- Acknowledge that this is a joint learning experience.
- Ignore the behavior.

Behavior: Heckling/Arguing -- disagreeing with everything you say; making personal attacks.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Redirect question to group or supportive individuals.
- Recognize participant's feelings and move one.
- Acknowledge positive points.
- Say: "I appreciate your comments, but I'd like to hear from others," or "It looks like we disagree."

Behavior: Grandstanding -- getting caught up in one's own agenda or thoughts to the detriment of other learners.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Say: "You are entitled to your opinion, belief or feelings, but now it's time we moved on to the next subject," or
- "Can you restate that as a question?" or
- "We'd like to hear more about that if there is time after the presentation."

Behavior: Overt Hostility/Resistance -- angry, belligerent, combative behavior.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Hostility can be a mask for fear. Reframe hostility as fear to depersonalize it.
- Respond to fear, not hostility.
- Remain calm and polite. Keep your temper in check.
- Don't disagree but build on or around what has been said.
- Move closer to the hostile person, maintain eye contact.
- Always allow him or her a way to gracefully retreat from the confrontation.

Behavior: Overt Hostility/Resistance -- angry, belligerent, combative behavior

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Say: "You seem really angry. Does anyone else feel this way?"
Solicit peer pressure.
- Do not accept the premise or underlying assumption, if it is false or prejudicial, e.g., "If by "queer" you mean homosexual..."
- Allow individual to solve the problem being addressed. He or she may not be able to offer solutions and will sometimes undermine his or her own position.
- Ignore behavior.
- Talk to him or her privately during a break.
- As a last resort, privately ask the individual to leave class for the good of the group.

Behavior: Griping -- maybe legitimate complaining.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Point out that we can't change policy here.
- Validate his/her point.
- Indicate you'll discuss the problem with the participant privately.
- Indicate time pressure.

Behavior: Side Conversations -- may be related to subject or personal. Distracts group members and you.

POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- Don't embarrass talkers.
- Ask their opinion on topic being discussed.
- Ask talkers if they would like to share their ideas.
- Casually move toward those talking.
- Make eye contact with them.
- Standing near the talkers, ask a near-by participant a question so that the new discussion is near the talkers.
- As a last resort, stop and wait.

Student Strategies

- Consider environmental, instructional, and behavioral systems within classrooms.
- Both universally and within the classroom, students are more likely to feel welcomed and engaged when there is a sense of order.
- Strategy: Schools draft a clear statement of purpose that focuses on both academic and social outcomes for all students and include staff's roles.

Student Strategies (cont.)

Targeted Group, Classroom, or Individual Student

- Model positive, engaging, and rewarding relationships with their peers.
- Facilitate positive interactions with other staff members.
- Communicate that every day of attendance counts! You want to see their face; acknowledge their presence.

Team Strategies

- School teams develop a clearly defined set of expectations (expected behaviors).
- School teams develop procedures for teaching expected behavior; educators subsequently receive training on a variety of strategies to teach social skills.
- School teams develop procedures for encouraging expected and school-appropriate behavior.

Team Strategies (cont.)

- School teams develop procedures for discouraging problem behavior.
- Specifically, teams should review current discipline policies to (a) provide clear definitions of infractions; (b) determine which behaviors should be managed in the classroom and which should be sent to the office; and (c) develop data decision rules to ensure appropriate strategies are used with repeat offenders.
- School teams develop procedures for record keeping and decision making.
- In addition to developing formative and summative data-collective systems, school teams should be taught to make informed decisions based on data patterns.

A Positive School Climate

- Increases the holding power of our classrooms
- Increases the holding power of our hallways
- Increases the holding power of our schools, universally
- Increases the holding power of our communities
- Assists in increasing the school completion rates for students with disabilities!





Positive school climate
powerfully affects student
motivation to learn.

My Action Plan

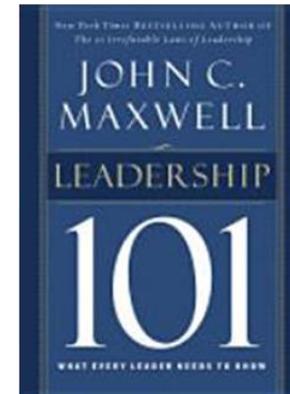
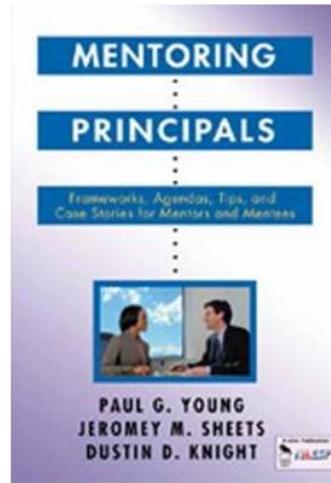
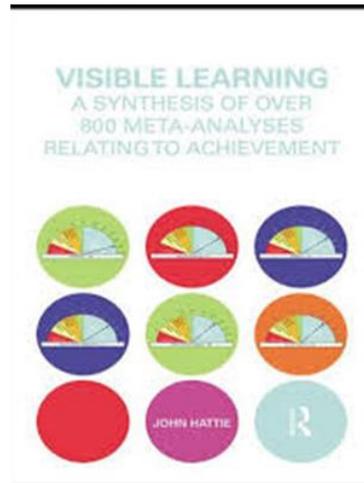
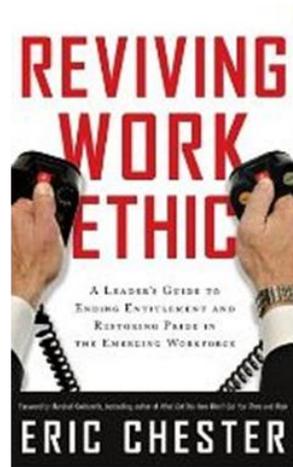
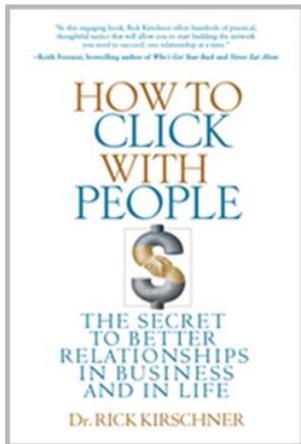
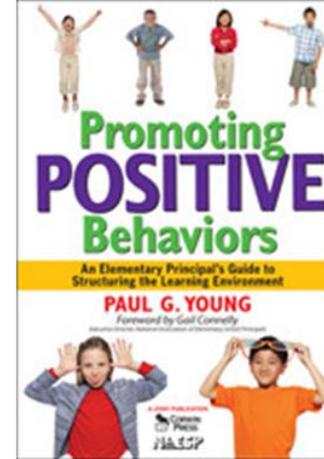
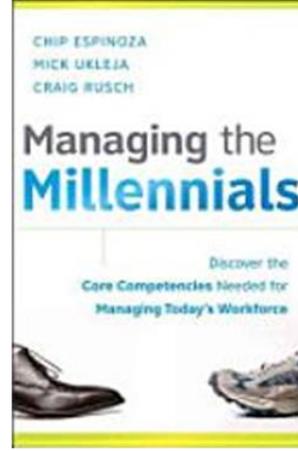
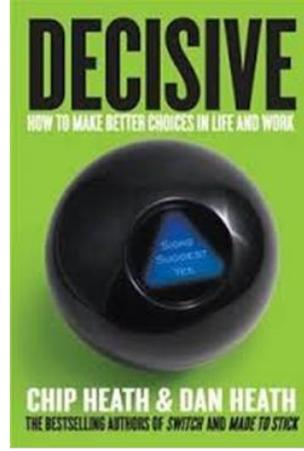
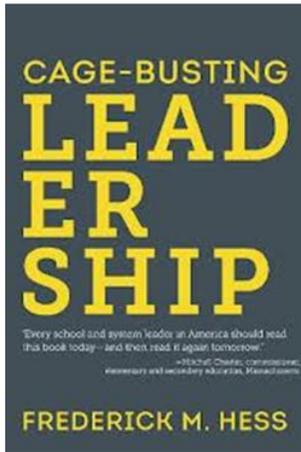
Cite several take-aways, implications, or strategies that you have determined to further develop to enhance your school culture.

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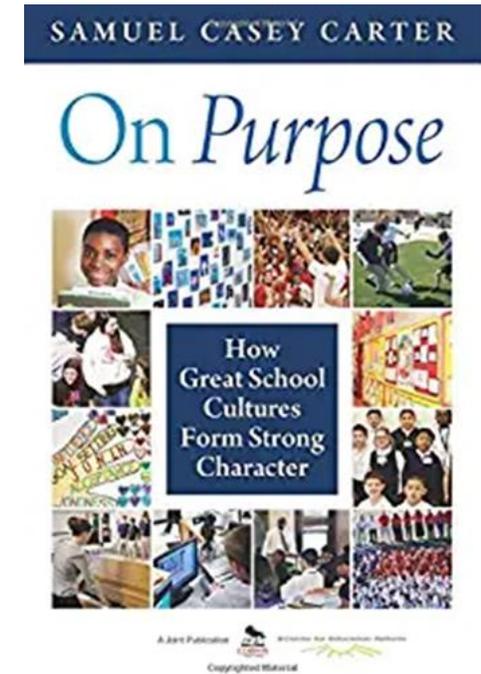
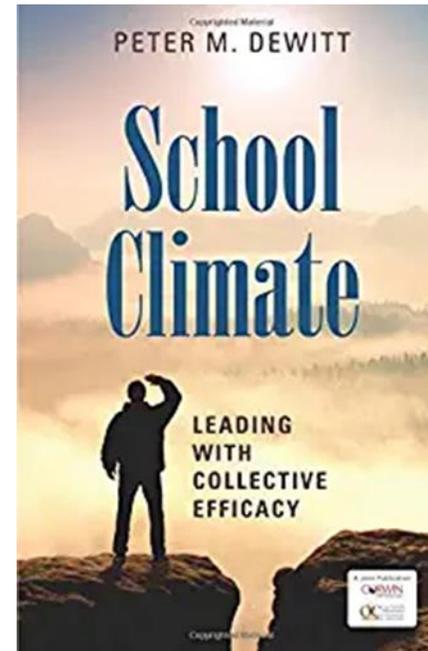
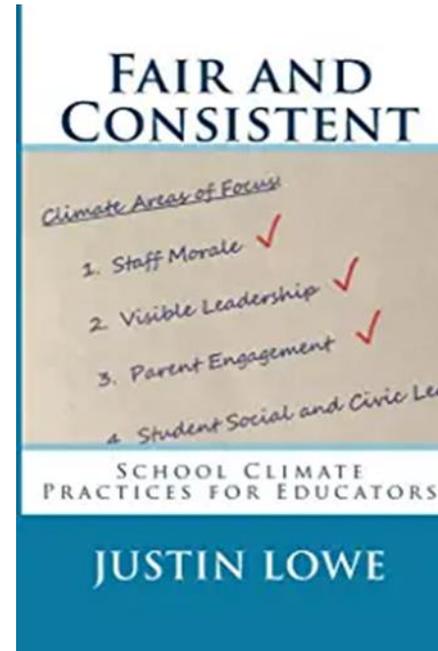
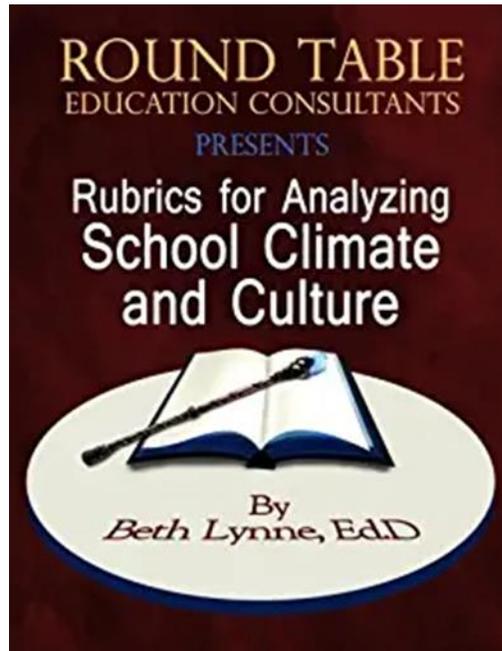
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3.

Recommended Reading



Recommended Reading



Session Feedback

Thank you for attending our session.
Please take a moment to provide
your feedback.

<https://tinyurl.com/2020ILC>



Share your conference highlights now!



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www.gadoe.org

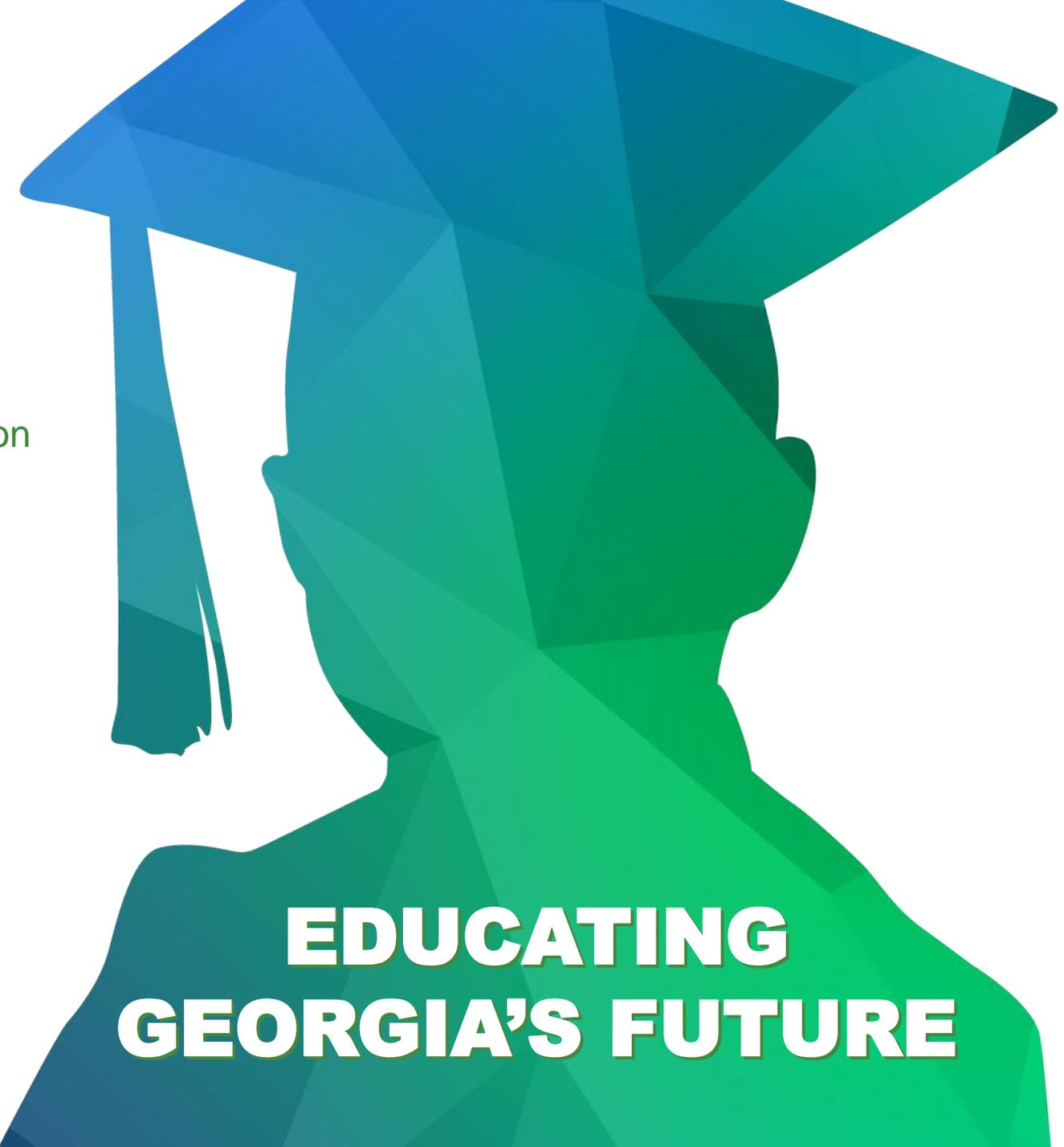
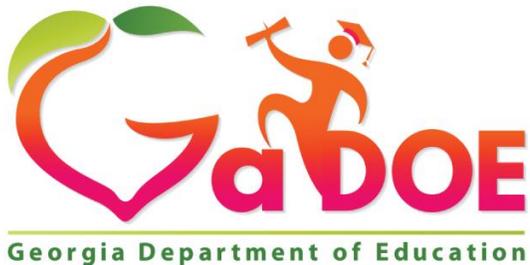


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 A large, stylized silhouette of a graduation cap (mortarboard) in shades of blue and green, positioned on the right side of the page.

**EDUCATING
GEORGIA'S FUTURE**