

Measuring School Climate: How Does Your Staff Really Feel?

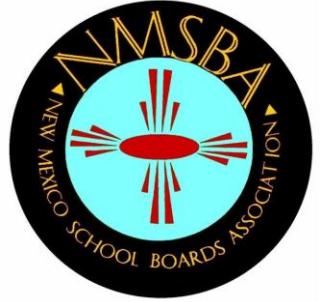
Presented at the NMSBA Annual Conference

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Jim Hall, President Los Alamos Public Schools Board of Education

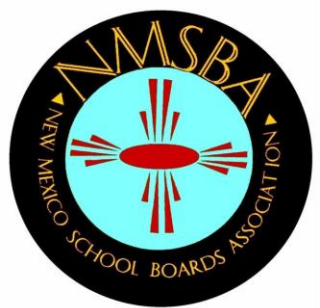
Dr. Kurt Steinhaus, Superintendent, Los Alamos Public Schools, and

Dr. Hugh Prather, Prather Consulting



We hope to answer four questions:

- What is school climate?
- Why is school climate important?
- How do you measure school climate?
- How do you go about changing school climate?

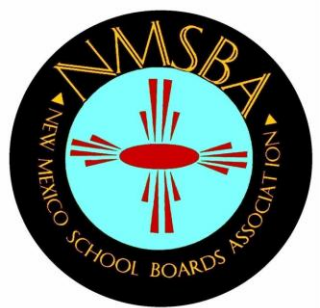


What's "School Climate" anyway?

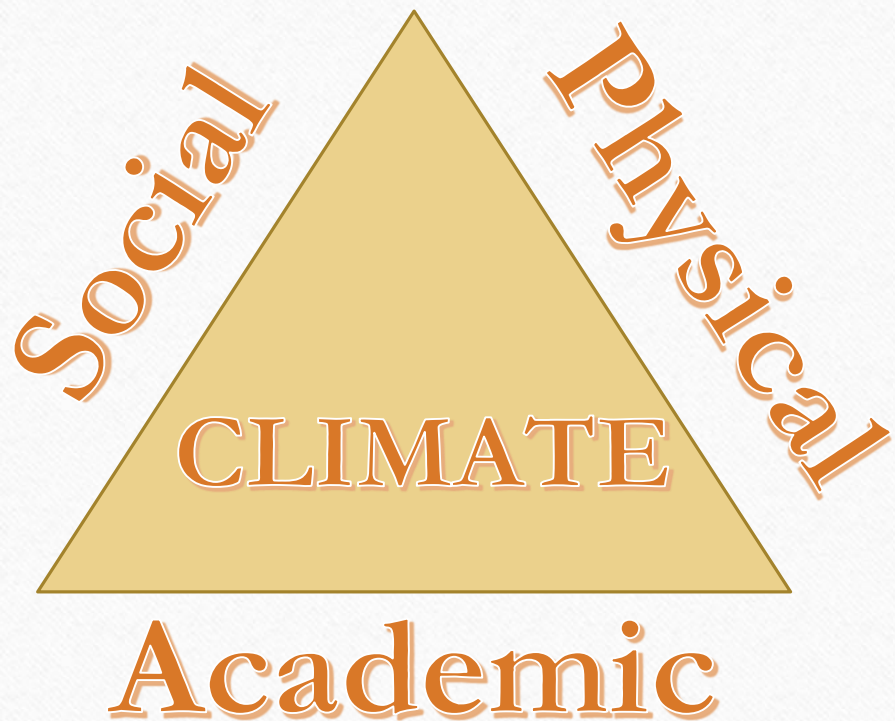
"School climate is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures."

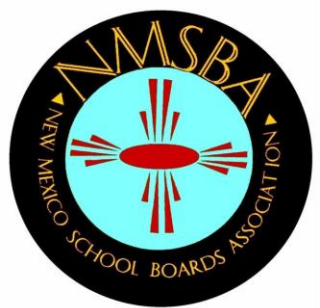
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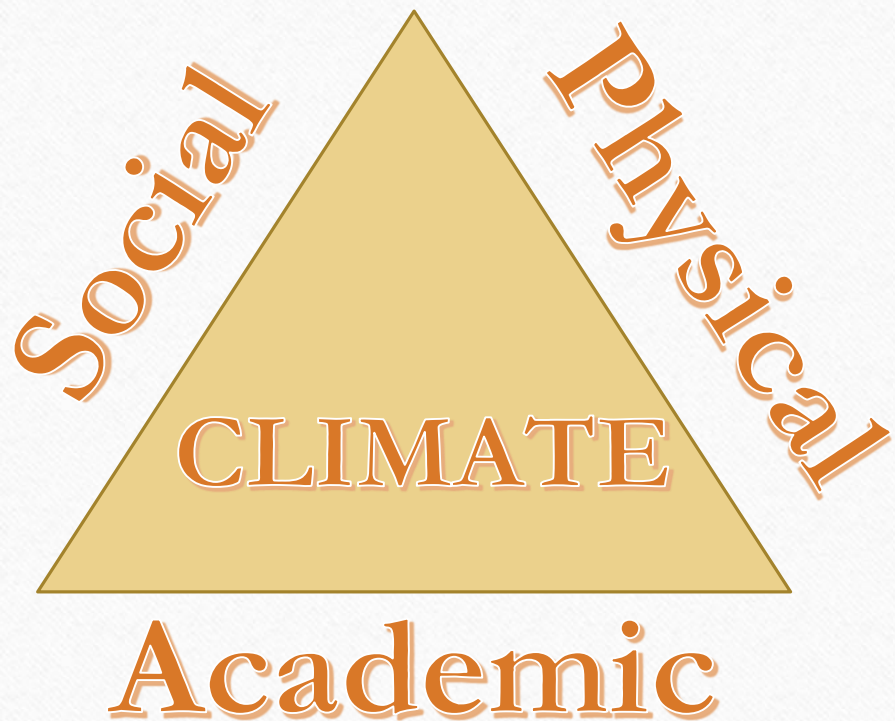


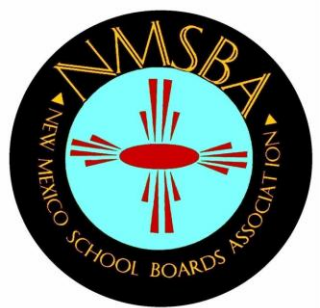
Dimensions of School Climate





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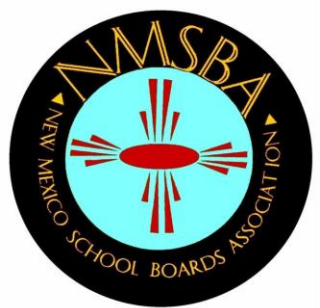
Physical dimensions include

- Appearance of the school building, classrooms, and campus
- School size and student-teacher ratios in the classroom
- Order and organization of classrooms in the school
- Availability of resources
- Safety and comfort



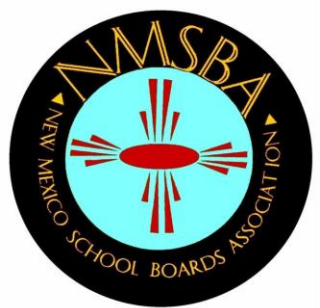
Social dimensions include:

- Quality of interpersonal relationships between and among students and staff
- Equitable and fair treatment of students by staff
- Degree of competition and social comparison between students
- Degree to which students and staff contribute to decision-making in the school



Academic dimensions include

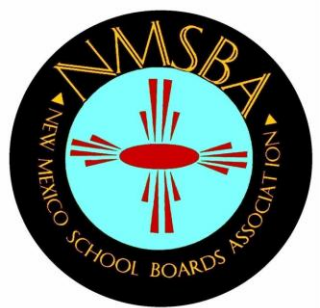
- Quality of instruction
- Teacher expectations for student achievement
- Monitoring student progress and reporting results to students and parents



Why is climate important?

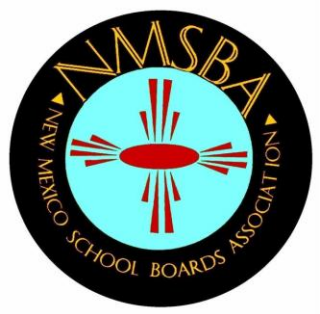
Research shows:

- Student and staff perceptions of climate affect academic motivation.
- Student and staff perceptions of climate influence student behavioral and emotional problems.
- Student and staff perceptions of a more positive climate are particularly beneficial for students at risk for negative outcomes



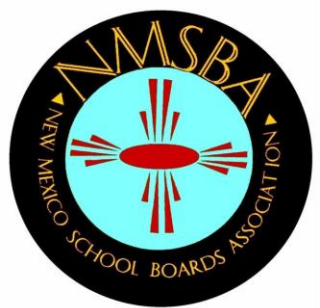
How do you measure school climate?

- A variety methods are possible including focus groups, interviews, Town-Hall discussions, and participatory action research.
- Probably the most common and most effective way is through well-designed anonymous surveys.



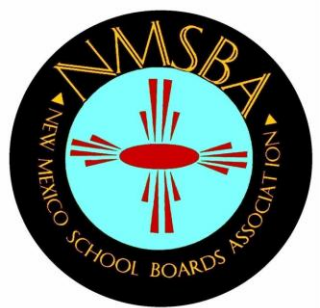
Measuring climate-The LAPS experience

- Used an adaptation of the Halpin-Croft Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire (OCDQ) for instructional (school) staff.
- Used an adaptation of Survey Monkey's Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) validated questions for operational staff.
- Measured each school site and the operational division independently to obtain results for each administrative unit.



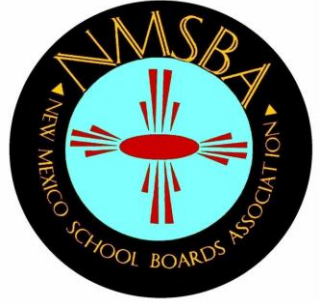
How do you change school climate?

- School climate is subject to change.
- Application of school improvement models to specific climate issues.
- Application of total quality management models to specific climate issues.
- Continue to assess specific climate issues on a regular basis.
- Celebrate successes and analyze areas where improvement continues to be needed.



Changing climate: The LAPS experience

- Thoughtful analysis of data from survey responses on a school by school basis.
- Targeted issues on a school by school basis for improvement.
- Progressive improvement by school sites.
- Plans to conduct a third year of school climate studies through survey.



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