Connecting the Dots: Resiliency, Social-Emotional Learning, and School Climate Standards

School Effectiveness vs School Improvement…(Same thing?)

- School Improvement: process, action, change (organic). How can schools improve? Focused on process and school “culture” dimensions.

**“Processes tend to be harder to define than outcomes.”**
(From booklet on http://amsterdam.oxfordma.net/files/2007/05/quality.doc)

Have “Devil’s Advocate” questions already?

- Looks like we already “do” some of this, don’t we? Is this really new?
- Isn’t this all just common sense?
- Does this promote academic achievement?
- Can we just get some practical applications for OUR jobs?
- How can we actually assess or measure our progress in using this (“Resiliency”) approach?
What’s the common “thread” here?
- Social-Emotional Learning? Character Education?
- Whole Child Approach? “Child-Centered focus? “Responsive Classrooms”
- Response to Intervention & Instruction (RtII)?
- Positive Behavior Support?
- Removing “barriers”? Emotional supports? “Safety nets” for struggling students?
- School Reform? School Improvement?
- Effective Schools? Etc, etc.,

The “CAN DO” mindset!

- The “positive psychology” approach
- The “strength-based” approach

(Essential question: “What can I/we DO?”
NOT, “ Here’s what I/we CAN’T do”. )
“Resiliency” definitions, and the “D” word(?)

- Ability to “bounce back”, “adapt”, “recover from adversity,” “regain balance”, “turn it around,” “overcome life’s obstacles”, “cope”, etc.

OR how about….?

- “Good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or DEVELOPMENT.”


Time for a “no brainer”!

- Generally speaking, does one’s “resilience” (one’s positive, “healthy”) DEVELOPMENT) contribute to his/her success in school and in life?
Resiliency: A Process of Human Development


- Birth Cohort = 698
  - 1/3 of cohort multiple risk factors

- Age 18
  - 2/3 of high risk group exhibited problem behaviors

- Ages 32 & 40
  - 5/6 of high risk group bounced back

“At-risk does not predetermine the amount of success we can have in working with the student and that which the student can experience.”
(From Florida Department of Education, 2002, quoted in Alison Adler’s “Single School Culture” overview, School District of Palm Beach County, FL.)

- At-risk does not predetermine FAILURE!
So maybe the “R” word is all about the “D” word!

“Good student [HUMAN] development and academic learning are inextricably linked.”

(Brian K. Perkins, as quoted in Henderson’s Resiliency In Action, Chapter 1, p.40.)

The “Protective (Internal) Factors”: What the “R” word is all about!

- Self-motivation (set goals, WORK towards, incrementally)
- Ability to defer short-term “gratification” for longer-term, more permanent “rewards”
- Ability to regulate one’s emotions (self-management skills)
- Flexibility in many/all types of situations/of people (social competency…social awareness)
- Self-confidence ("authentic" self-esteem), self-efficacy
- Ability to form positive relationships (social skills)
- Sense of respect, honesty, empathy, religiosity, etc., Many, many more!
Resilience is **IN** the person!

Next Question:
Are we BORN with these internal strengths (these internal “protective factors” … these “social-emotional” skills)?

They are **DEVELOPED**

(The “D” word, again!)
So what ARE we born with? And born into?

- Born with? Our brain/biological makeup, our temperament (Can be protective or put one “at risk”.)
  - * The amygdala regulates emotion (read Horatio Sanchez!)

- Born into? Our environment: social and economic influences. (Can include both protective and risk factors.)

**NATURE and NURTURE!**

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Search Institute’s 40 Assets

Protective assets: the more, the better! (Isn’t this all just common sense?)

- External (environmental) categories:
  - support, empowerment,
  - boundaries/expectations, constructive use of time, etc.

- Internal categories: commitment to
  - learning, positive values, social competence, positive identity, etc.

(See www.search-institute.org)
To reiterate…

- Resiliency/resilience isn’t “done” for someone…we don’t “do” resiliency.
- Resiliency is IN the person.
- Resiliency is not a program.
- Resiliency isn’t “fixed” or “a given” in one’s lifetime.

Resiliency: Now you have it, now you don’t?

- “…The ability to sustain our resiliency is also directly affected by the extent to which environmental protective factors exist in our lives.”
  
(See Milstein and Henry, 2008, p.63.)
Teach the social-emotional skills directly or model?

- Direct teaching of social competencies, positive values, etc. (Refer to Search Institute’s “Internal Assets”)
  Currently being developed for infusion into all subject areas in the Houston (TX) Independent SD (Contact: Peter Messiah, Safe Schools)

- “Counselors, teachers, administrators need to model social and academic skills.” -Ruth Charney, Teaching Children to Care

- “We’re always teaching...kids are always watching.”- Barry Schwartz, Dorwin Cartwright Professor of Social Theory and Social Action, Swarthmore College

So aren’t the “R” (and the “D”) words really all about the “E” word? The Power of the ENVIRONMENT

- Families
- Peers/friends
- Schools (also the “workplace culture” for school staff)
- Communities

The above: One’s “adaptive systems” that normally protect people (Ann Masten, psychologist)
And so……
What HUMAN NEEDS do these “adaptive systems” (each with their own “cultures”) PROVIDE or FULFILL for us?

Think!................

The “Big 6” Environmental (Resiliency-fostering) Domains
- caring, supportive environment
- expectations of “the best” from the other (self-fulfilling prophecy)
- opportunities to contribute (to be heard/participate meaningfully)
- opportunities to bond/connect (pro-socially)
- skills for life or survival (“show/teach me”…need for guidance)
- clear boundaries, safety (predictability)
But let’s not forget MASLOW! (4 layers of the pyramid…notice any similarities?)

- Physiological needs: air, food, sleep, water, etc.
- *Safety needs: orderliness, predictability, etc.
- *Social needs: family, friendship, intimacy
- *Esteem: self-value, recognition, etc.
- Self-actualization
What is school “climate”? 

- “…refers to the quality and character of school life…and based on patterns of students’, parents’ and school personnel’s experience of school life….”  
  (From the Center for Social and Emotional Education/CSEE, Columbia Univ.)

** Perception = Reality?**

Regarding key components of a positive school climate 

- “It is interesting to compare these descriptors of positive school climate to the six primary environmental resiliency builders identified in the Resiliency Wheel….”  
  (Nan Henderson, Resiliency In Action, p. 39.)
Now, compare the “Big 6” with actual school climate survey item examples!

“My teachers expect students to learn.”

“Adults at my school are positive role-models.”

“I belong to a club, team or organization at my school”

“I feel safe at this school.”

“My teachers listen to my ideas.”

“I am ready for the real world in reference to my ability with mathematics.”

In terms of the “Resiliency Approach”, what can school climate survey results show us when used with any school improvement process?
Take your pick!

- How well we promote “resiliency”?
- How well we meet all needs academic, social, emotional, physical?
- How well we promote a positive school climate?

So now, let’s make some connections…

- Is resiliency synonymous with positive, healthy development?
- Can a quality environment (i.e. family, school, etc.) provide for basic and higher-level needs to be met which, in turn, sets the stage for LEARNING?
- With these needs met, is one more apt to function better cognitively, socially, and emotionally and grow in the development of these skills?
Important connections: The “E” word and academic achievement!

Schools in S. Carolina with the most positive climates had

- greater proportions of AYP objectives
- higher student achievement
- higher graduation rates
- higher school “report card” ratings

(From 2006-07 study, S. Carolina Ed. Policy Ctr., in collaboration with the S. Carolina Dept. of Ed.)

A review of the “lit” revealed…

A positive school climate is associated and predictive of:

- Academic achievement
- School success
- Effective violence prevention
- Students’ healthy development
- *Teacher retention

(Article: “School Climate: Research, Policy, Practice, and Teacher Education”, J. Cohen, et.al.,2009.)
Benefits of Measuring and Improving School Climate (from *NSCC*)

- High quality teaching, student learning and achievement
- Safe and civil schools
- High quality educational management and leadership: Coordinated, transparent and comprehensive efforts
- Accountability
- Authentic learning communities and support substantive school improvement efforts
- Recognizing the essential social, emotional, ethical and civic as well as academic dimensions of school life and learning: the foundation for positive youth development, learning and engaged citizenry

*See nscc.csee.net.(National School Climate Center)*

More connections: The “E” word and academic achievement!

- CUBE study (2006): showed that an improved school climate contributes to higher student achievement, fewer dropouts, etc.

- CSCS/“California Healthy Kids Survey”: examined issue of school “well-being” (climate) and academic achievements by school ethnic composition.

- Elizabeth Greenburg’s study (2004): showed NAEP math scores increased as climate scores improved.

- **NSCC/CSEE White Paper (2007): “School climate promotes—or complicates—students’ ability to learn and achieve academically.”**
And don’t forget!

“Specific school climate attributes influence critical teacher behaviors that improve teaching and learning in the classroom.” (From Answers.com)

WHY is that?

A “No-brainer” answer (as a question):

How effectively can a perceived non-caring, non-communicative, unpredictable, inconsistent, unsafe school (“workplace”) environment foster staff job satisfaction?
Can job satisfaction affect educational outcomes?

Can the school staff member who finds his/her activities, methods, interactions, and approaches, with students, rewarding in themselves, more effectively affect learning? (Think about “intrinsic satisfiers”)

** See “Professional Relationships” in CSEE’s “12 Dimensions of School Climate Measured”

So how can we assess progress with using the Resiliency Approach”? (Heard that somewhere before?)

Remember: The “Big 6” are ALREADY embedded in all that educators do! (in strategies, approaches, programs, etc.).
Try this…….

1. ASSESS in terms of the 6 “resiliency” domains, IDENTIFY “need” areas and then PLAN for removing the roadblocks from including more. (What do individuals in the school PROVIDE that meets the “resiliency-fostering” needs (the Big 6)?

*See Ch.8,"Tools to Facilitate Change" in Resiliency in Schools (2002) and also Milstein and Henry (2008)

*Also see Krovetz (2008)

2. Use school climate surveys: assess the perceptions of staff, AND students, AND parents.
- Google search “school climate survey” (numerous!)
- **View sample surveys (Comprehensive School Climate Inventory) on schoolclimate.org .
- Also www.casel.org, see “staff school climate survey”.
- *http://ed.sc.gov (S. Carolina DOE surveys teachers, students, parents every year and publishes a “report card” for every school.


So how valuable are school climate surveys?

- Perceptions are one’s “reality”.
  (Perceptions shape culture…culture shapes behavior)
- Analyze perception “gaps” (students, staff)
- *Use to analyze “the whole”, along with other data (i.e. achievement, attendance, dropout, discipline, school safety reports)
- What gets measured and rewarded gets done!
- Integrate with school improvement efforts!

And don’t forget the “Devil’s Advocate” questions…

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  Is this really new?
- Isn’t this all just common sense?
- But does this promote academic achievement?
- Can we just get some practical applications?
- How can we actually assess or measure our progress in using this?
RESOURCES

- Visit www.pde.state.pa.us, then search “resiliency” and view all “professional development opportunities”, “web” and “print resources”.
- Highly recommended: Take the new, FREE online course, “Promoting Student Success Through Resiliency” (15 Act 48 hour credits available!) Link is on this site page.

What’s “IN”…

- PA School Climate Standards/Interpersonal Standards (see PDE site, then search “climate”)
- Ohio is a model: Google “Ohio School Climate Guidelines”
- Chicago Public Schools “Toolkit”-compares data from their “Student Connection Survey” with other data (academic, attendance, incidence reports, etc.) See www.cpstoolkit.com/Howto.aspx
- “Comprehensive School Climate Inventory” developed at the CSEE (Columbia Univ.)
Want to discuss more ideas? Need more resources?

Contact:
Joe Loccisano, Division of Student and Safe School Services, PDE
717-346-4253 (direct line)
Email: jloccisano@state.pa.us

Printed resources from PDE’s “Resiliency/Wellness” webpage