School Climate **IMPROVEMENT** | Resource Package

Quick Guide
on Making School Climate Improvements

MARCH 2016

Safe Supportive Learning
Engagement | Safety | Environment
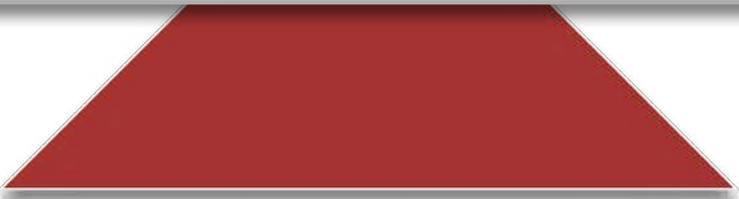
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Introduction

Students learn best when they are in environments in which they feel safe, supported, challenged, and accepted. In addition, environments that have strong school climates foster the social, emotional, and academic well-being of all students. Research shows that when schools and districts effectively focus on improving school climate, students are more likely to engage in the curriculum, achieve academically, and develop positive relationships; students are less likely to exhibit problem behaviors; and teacher turnover is lower and teacher satisfaction is higher.[1,2]

This *Quick Guide* provides district and school leaders, teachers, school staff, and other members of the school community with information about how to initiate, implement, and sustain school climate improvements. You can use the *Quick Guide* in combination with the other tools and resources available within the School Climate Improvement Resource Package (Resource Package), including self-assessments to identify which resources would be most helpful to you as well as pointers on how to approach school climate improvements.

You can create a positive school climate through a coordinated, purposeful effort. Districts and schools that effectively improve school climate typically engage in five sets of activities. Figure 1 lists the five activity sets. This *Quick Guide* provides you with strategies on how to effectively implement these sets of activities. It also advises you on how to implement the strategies well and what to avoid.

Figure 1. Five Activity Sets for Improving School Climate
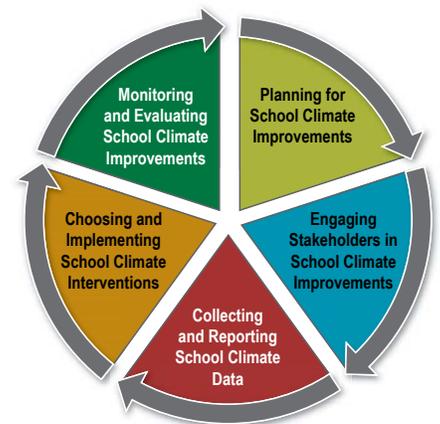
> *School climate* reflects how members of the school community experience the school, including interpersonal relationships, teacher and other staff practices, and organizational arrangements. School climate includes factors that serve as conditions for learning and that support physical and emotional safety, connection and support, and engagement. A positive school climate reflects attention to fostering social and physical safety, providing support that enables students and staff to realize high behavioral and academic standards as well as encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community.

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[1] National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (2011). *Making the case for the importance of school climate and its measurement* [Webinar]. Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/events/webinar/making-case-importance-school-climate-and-its-measurement

[2] Osher, D., Kendziora, K., & Chinen, M. (2008). *Student connection research: Final narrative report to the Spencer Foundation.* Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research. Retrieved from http://www.air.org/expertise/index/?fa=viewContent&content_id=383

Why Should We Focus on School Climate Now?

The way students, families, teachers, and other school staff experience the school and school-related activities affects student attendance, learning, and achievement. Students who learn in positive learning environments that are safe, supportive, and engaging are more likely to improve academically, participate more fully in the classroom, and develop skills that will help them be successful in school and in life.[3,4] In addition, students who experience positive school climates are less likely to participate in disruptive behavior.[5] Similarly, the ways in which teachers experience the climate of the school impact their levels of stress and burnout.[6] Given the importance of school climate for teaching and learning, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) also references school climate as an additional indicator of a school's success.

Can Our School or District Make School Climate Improvements?

School climate improvements are doable and inexpensive. Any school or district can partake in efforts to improve conditions for learning for students and staff. In fact, you may already be conducting activities aimed at improving your school climate! For example, many schools are implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports to improve school climate and reduce suspensions. By participating in the activities outlined in this *Quick Guide*, as well as additional resources in the Resource Package, you will have the necessary tools and resources to evaluate your current efforts and engage your staff and school community more strategically in having a positive impact on school climate. This Quick Guide provides five related sets of activities that can help improve your school climate in an ongoing manner.

Who Can Use This Quick Guide?

This *Quick Guide* is for school or district teams that want to lead or support school climate improvements. It provides you with an overview of the strategies you can take to improve the climate of your school or schools. This *Quick Guide* also is for those who want to learn more about the strategies and activities schools and district can use to improve school climate.

Is It Necessary to Do Each Set of Activities to See School Climate Improve?

Schools and districts that successfully improve school climate engage in all five sets of activities (see Figure 1).[7] However, how you approach each activity set varies. You can start at any point within any set of activities to improve school climate. For example, you may start with data collection activities (Activity Set 3) in the first year to help you plan (Activity Set 1) your second year. Or, if you have already established a baseline to measure change and have implemented interventions, you may start with monitoring and evaluation (Activity Set 5). Most important is to

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3   MacNeil, A. J., Prater, D. L., & Busch, S. (2009). The effects of school culture and climate on student achievement. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 12*(1), 73–84.

4   Ripski, M. B., & Gregory, A. (2009). Unfair, unsafe, and unwelcome: Do high school students' perceptions of unfairness, hostility, and victimization in school predict engagement and achievement? *Journal of School Violence, 8*(4), 355–375.

5   Osher, D., Dwyer, K., & Jimerson, S. R. (2006). Safe, supportive, and effective schools: Promoting school success to reduce school violence. In S. R. Jimerson & M. J. Furlong (Eds.), *Handbook of school violence and school safety: From research to practice* (pp. 51–72). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

6   Grayson, J. L., & Alvarez, H. K. (2008). School climate factors relating to teacher burnout: A mediator model. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(5), 1349–1363.

7   Darling-Churchill, K., Taketa, J., & Temkin, D. (2016). *Descriptive Study of Safe Supportive Schools Grant Program.* Washington, DC: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments.

engage in strategies across the five sets of activities and to keep doing them over time as you learn what is and is not working in your ongoing effort to improve school climate. The level of engagement within each set of activities will differ depending on your local context and your specific needs and strengths. In addition, you can enhance your efforts by aligning school climate efforts with other activities that are part of your district's overall strategic plan.

Is It Important to Collect School Climate Data?

Yes, to effectively improve your school climate, you need to know what your strengths and challenges are. Collecting and analyzing school climate data help you identify areas of strength and challenge as trends over time. School climate data, when added to incident data, provide a more nuanced understanding about how students, staff, and families experience conditions for learning. You can collect data through school climate surveys that respect privacy and protect the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information that is provided through the survey; alternatively, you can collect data through anonymous school climate surveys. You can enhance the knowledge you gain by analyzing related administrative data and conducting focus groups and interviews. This *Quick Guide* provides information on how to collect, analyze, and report school climate data. In addition, the U.S. Department of Education's School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) platform provides you with a free resource to help collect, analyze, and report school climate data. This platform allows you to either collect data anonymously or through surveys that respect privacy and protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information.

Where Can We Find More Information?

This *Quick Guide* provides information to start or enhance your school climate improvements. After each activity set in the *Quick Guide*, we provide a short list of resources you can access to get more information. At the end, we also provide more detailed information about the tools, resources, and information in the Resource Package, which is a comprehensive system of supports that can help improve school climate. In particular, the Resource Package includes self-assessments that you can complete to identify which resources within the package would be most helpful to you, electronic links to those resources, as well as some pointers on what you should keep in mind as you work on making school climate improvements.

Planning for School Climate Improvements
(ACTIVITY SET 1)

Why Is Planning Important?

Effective planning is essential to maximize the impact of your school climate improvements, ensure efficient resource use, and enhance the likelihood your efforts will have a lasting effect. Planning can help you identify the supports and infrastructure (e.g., resources, knowledge, systems) needed to implement and sustain your school climate improvements.

What Are the Key Things to Do?

Strategies and activities that will help you realize the goals of this activity set include the following steps:

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

Planning your school climate improvement can provide the foundation for the remainder of your efforts. Planning allows you to be purposeful in how you engage members of your school community and how you collect and analyze data; planning also prepares you to implement interventions that meet your needs.

a. **Develop a Core Planning Team.** Form a core planning team (school climate team) that will coordinate school climate efforts, or charge an existing districtwide or schoolwide team (e.g., school improvement team) with addressing school climate.

b. **Integrate School Climate Improvement.** Integrate school climate improvement with other district and school improvement efforts. School climate efforts will be more effective when they align with, support, and receive support from other district and school efforts that aim to create safe, supportive, and academically effective schools.

c. **Create a Vision and Logic Model.** Develop a vision and related theory of action (logic model) to guide you, including the resources you will use (inputs), and the policies and practices you will implement (outputs) to realize your intended impacts (outcomes).

d. **Plan for Data Collection and Analysis.** Determine the types of school climate data you will collect and how you will collect and analyze the data. For example, the free U.S. Department of Education's School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) is based on strong theoretical and empirical research to meet this need. EDSCLS is the product of focus groups and a full-scale pilot test that were conducted to ensure the validity and reliability of the individual items and the resulting scales.

e. **Develop a Communication Plan.** Determine how you will strategically disseminate information about your school climate efforts to members of your school community as well as how you will obtain their input about the efforts.

f. **Plan to Routinize Practices.** Determine how you will make school climate improvement a part of routine policies, ongoing practices, and systems (e.g., hiring, onboarding, monitoring, professional development).

g. **Plan to Differentiate Supports.** Determine how you will differentiate supports for members of your school community, including administrators, teachers, school staff, students, and families, to improve school climate.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

a. Develop Core Planning Team

● There is a core planning team that leads and monitors your efforts.	● It is not clear who is leading the efforts.
● The core planning team aligns with other important teams, such as the school improvement team).	● The core planning team is a standalone effort (e.g., it is not connected to districtwide or schoolwide planning).
● The school climate effort has the backing of key district and school leaders (e.g., leadership regularly speaks about the importance of school climate).	● Key leaders do not back the planning (e.g., leaders do not consider climate to be a key priority).
● The team is composed of a diversity of stakeholders representing the groups in the school community.	● Members of the group are not representative of the school community (e.g., only one stakeholder group is represented).
● Team members have sufficient knowledge, time, and support to engage in the work (e.g., technical support is provided to the team so that everyone can make technically informed decisions).	● Team members lack the knowledge, time, and support to do the work (e.g., teachers on the team do not get release time to participate, meetings are scheduled at a time when it is difficult for family members to participate).

b. Integrate School Climate Improvement

● Systems incorporate school climate practices within other important district or school initiatives (e.g., including such initiatives as educator effectiveness, professional learning, school improvement, multi-tiered system of supports).	● School climate efforts are standalone programs (e.g., educator effectiveness efforts do not incorporate school climate practices).
● School climate practices are seen as a critical ingredient to effective instruction (e.g., include inclusive practices as a part of regular instruction).	● School climate practices are not a critical part of academic instruction (e.g., inclusive practices are not considered as a part of regular instruction).
● School climate work is treated as an ongoing effort that is integrated into school and classroom policies and practices (e.g., student social and emotional skills is integrated into academic instruction).	● School climate is treated as a program to implement, something that you start and finish.

c. Create Vision and Logic Model

● The vision describes what you mean by school climate (e.g., it includes components of school climate that your stakeholders value).	● The vision and mission are vague and do not provide a solid foundation for your efforts (e.g., the vision and mission use words that are unclear to stakeholders).
● The logic model and corresponding inputs and outputs lead to outcomes as outlined by your vision and mission (e.g., there is evidence that the resources and practices you implement lead to your intended outcomes).	● The logic model is not clear on how the input and outputs lead to outcomes (e.g., the activities outlined are vague and there is little to no research that activities lead to desired outcomes).
● The district or school has the necessary resources and support personnel to enact the strategies in the logic model (e.g., have the support from personnel to enact practices outlined in the logic model).	● The district or school plans school climate activities as an add-on program, overcommitting resources or personnel (e.g., commit resources it does not have that are necessary to implement practices).

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	**What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?**

d. Plan for Data Collection and Analysis

● The core planning team decides to administer a school climate survey that is aligned with the team's vision and logic model.	● The core team selects a school climate survey that is poorly aligned with the team's vision, producing data that are not useful for school climate improvement.
● The other types of data you decide to collect should help you answer critical questions about your school climate (e.g., determine if you also will collect interview, focus group, and administrative data).	● You do not choose other types of data to collect or analyze (e.g., you do not collect additional data to help better understand what you learn from the survey data).
● The data collection plan indicates who will participate in each of the data collection activities (e.g., determine how you will select focus group participants).	● The data collection plan is not clear about who will participate in the data collection activities (e.g., the data collection plan has selection bias).
● The analysis plan aligns the questions you will ask and the data you will collect (e.g., see climate items and dimensions in EDSCLS).	● A plan does not exist on how the data analysis will take place (e.g., no plan exists to ensure that the necessary data exist to answer critical school climate-related questions).

e. Develop Communication Plan

● There is a strategic communication plan that addresses how you will communicate findings and improvement efforts (e.g., develop electronic mailing lists, websites, and other social media that specifically focus on school climate).	● The district or school lacks a plan on how it will communicate the school climate efforts (e.g., no strategic effort exists to share the data collected or specify how to use them for continuous improvement).
● There are processes that help the district or school obtain input from the district or school community.	● There is no process in place to obtain the input of members of the district or school community.

f. Plan to Routinize Practices

● You develop hiring practices that support the importance of school climate (e.g., interview protocols ask potential candidates about their role in making students and family members feel welcome and supported).	● Hiring practices and staff evaluations do not address matters that relate to producing strong conditions for learning (e.g., interview protocols do not require potential candidates to state how they would develop a welcoming environment).
● There is an onboarding process (the types of information that new staff need to know) that includes information about the importance of school climate and how the district or school measures it.	● The district or school does not provide new hires with guidance on the importance of school climate, their role in improving school climate, or the policies related to climate.
● The scope of the professional learning experiences and resources include topics related to school climate (e.g., how to create a trauma-sensitive environment).	● The district or school does not provide teachers with learning opportunities and supports to improve skills related to school climate (e.g., teachers are not provided with collaborative time to talk about ways to improve student social and emotional skills).

g. Plan to Differentiate Supports

● There is a multi-tiered approach to helping all members of the school community realize high academic and behavioral standards and create an inclusive and academically productive school (e.g., there is a plan to differentiate support for students).

● The supports the district or school plans to offer members of your school community are the same (e.g., when planning events, the district or school does not take into account that parents have different work schedules).

? DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PLANNING SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENTS?

- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual* section on planning: https://safesupportive-learning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section1. It breaks down these action steps further and includes additional strategies and resources.

- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 1* on engaging leadership in school climate improvements, a key to planning this ongoing work: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Online-Mod-ules/1-Convincing-Leadership. The module provides an activity to practice engaging leadership.

- Go to the planning sections of the *School Climate Improvement Action Guides* for each stakeholder: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/action-guides/section1. Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support planning school climate improvements.

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements
(ACTIVITY SET 2)

Why Is Engaging Stakeholders Important?

Engaging administrators, teachers, students, district staff, parents or guardians, and community partners can help you enhance response rates and the quality of responses, which can help you better identify stakeholder needs and concerns. Engaging stakeholders includes informing all members of your school community about school climate improvements as well as obtaining stakeholder input and feedback on the effort. This process is more effective when stakeholders receive necessary training and support (e.g., professional development), when communication strategies maximize access to information, and when school climate efforts are connected with other efforts the stakeholders are involved, such as positive behavioral interventions and supports, trauma-sensitive approaches, efforts to reduce racial disparities, and social and emotional learning.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

To engage your stakeholders, use the plans you developed during Activity Set 1. In addition, engaging stakeholders up front facilitates data collection because stakeholders who are engaged are more likely to respond to surveys and are more likely to take the surveys seriously (Activity Set 3). Finally, engaged stakeholders are more likely to implement the chosen school climate interventions properly (Activity Set 4).

What Are the Key Things to Do?

Strategies and activities that will help you realize the goals of this activity set include:

a. **Disseminate Key Messaging.** Disseminate information to all members of your school community about your school climate efforts.

b. **Obtain Stakeholder Input.** Obtain stakeholder input, feedback, and concerns about the school climate efforts.

c. **Build a Shared Understanding.** Create a shared understanding about what school climate is as well as strategies to promote a positive school climate.

d. **Share Information About the Importance of Data.** Provide guidance on the data collection process and orient stakeholders to the importance of the data on the overall efforts.

e. **Develop Family-School-Community Partnerships.** Use effective strategies to form strong family-school-community partnerships.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

a. Disseminate Key Messaging

● Communication activities help people understand the importance of school climate and that it is possible to assess and improve it.	● There are few communication activities that focus on the importance of school climate and how to improve it.
● Messaging includes the importance and value of participation for each stakeholder group (e.g., creating a school environment that is more welcoming to families).	● Communication activities are not tailored to the interests of all stakeholders (e.g., messaging is the same for all stakeholders).
● Core planning team uses multiple communication strategies to disseminate information effectively (e.g., newsletters, websites, forums).	● The core planning team uses only one communication technique, if any, to reach stakeholders (e.g., passing out one newsletter that describes the school climate efforts).

b. Obtain Stakeholder Input

● Stakeholders provide input and feedback in multiple ways (e.g., at forums and through surveys).	● Not all stakeholder groups have opportunities to provide feedback.
● Stakeholders help refine efforts.	● Stakeholders provide their input, but their input is not considered in the overall efforts.
● Stakeholders actively contribute to developing a plan for engaging stakeholders during data collection and developing and implementing interventions.	● Stakeholders do not participate in planning ways to engage community members in school climate efforts.

c. Build a Shared Understanding

● During orientation activities, stakeholders develop a shared understanding of school climate, reviewing the vision, mission, and theory of action.	● Stakeholders receive the definition of school climate but do not have an opportunity to provide input.
● During orientation activities, stakeholders review research-based strategies that the district or school could use to improve the school climate.	● Stakeholders do not have opportunities to review research on school climate and the strategies to support a positive school climate.
● Members of the school community are provided with ongoing supports so that they can develop a deep understanding and master how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments (e.g., social and emotional learning and professional learning communities).	● Members of the school community are provided superficial opportunities to learn about how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments (e.g., participate in passive learning opportunities).
● All members of the school community own school climate improvement.	● School climate efforts do not penetrate all schools and all relevant interactions between and among students, families, and staff.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

d. Share Information About the Importance of Data

- Stakeholders receive information about the importance of collecting and using school climate data.
- Stakeholders receive information about the data collection process (e.g., who will participate in the process and participants' duties).
- Stakeholders receive information about how you will use the data (e.g., how you will use data to select interventions to improve the school climate).

- Stakeholders do not receive information about the importance of school climate data (e.g., they receive information about data collection but not about why it is important).
- Stakeholders receive insufficient information about the data collection process (e.g., how confidentiality will be ensured).
- Stakeholders do not receive information about how the data will be used (e.g., why disaggregating data is important).

e. Develop Family-School-Community Partnerships

- Family and community participation is high.
- Families and community members understand that their participation is important and that there are multiple ways they can positively engage with the school.
- Families have multiple opportunities to participate. When planning activities, you take into account the multiple types of jobs family members hold and try to accommodate their work schedules.

- Family participation is low.
- Families have a limited number of ways to interact with the school community (e.g., only the opportunity to participate in an open house or parent-teacher conferences).
- Families are unaware of events or cannot attend events because of work or other obligations.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS IN SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENTS?

- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual* section on engaging stakeholders: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section2. The manual breaks down these action steps further and includes additional strategies and resources.
- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 2* on engaging stakeholders: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Online-Modules/2-Engaging-Stakeholders. It provides an activity to practice engaging stakeholders.
- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Action Guides* for different stakeholders: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/action-guides/section2. Each guide provides ways stakeholders can support school climate improvements by activity set.

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data
(ACTIVITY SET 3)

Why Is Collecting and Reporting Data Important?

Data collection furnishes evidence of how your stakeholders perceive the school climate. This set of activities provides you with strategies on how to collect, analyze, and report your school climate data. The results of your data collection and analysis can guide your action plans to improve the climate in your school as well as support your assessment of the effects of your efforts to improve school climate. The result also can inform other efforts that relate to school climate, such as bullying prevention and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

You collect data throughout the activity sets. In Activity Set 1 (planning), you collect data during your initial readiness assessment. In addition, you develop plans on the types of data to collect and how to analyze your data. The results (Activity Set 4) will guide the interventions you select. You continue to collect data to monitor and evaluate your effort (Activity Set 5).

What Are the Key Things to Do?

Strategies and activities that will help you realize the goals of this activity set include the following:

a. **Finalize Measures/Confirm Survey Instrument.** Finalize the measures you will use to collect school climate data—for example, surveys, focus groups, and administration data. Based on planning and state/district priorities, review your school climate survey instrument (and any other additional data sources you plan to collect) to ensure that items that align with your vision and logic model are included. Consider whether additional items are needed. For example, for the U.S. Department of Education's School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) platform, additional items can be added to the data collection platform if needed.

b. **Collect Data.** Collect your school climate data consistently across members of your school community.

c. **Analyze Data.** Analyze your data to help you answer the critical questions you developed about your school climate. Provide reports summarizing the analysis of the various data sources, disaggregating data when appropriate. For example, the EDSCLS platform produces a report for each set of stakeholders surveyed.

> The EDSCLS platform comprises free surveys schools and districts can use to measure school climate. EDSCLS comes with a free data collection platform and reporting functionality.

d. **Use Additional Resources.** Use the *Data Interpretation Guide* and *Topical Discussion Guides* in the Resource Package to help you interpret and use your data to improve specific school climate topic areas overall and to help you implement a multi-tiered system of supports.

e. **Allow Stakeholders to Review Data.** Engage your stakeholders in reviewing and interpreting your data reports.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?
a. Finalize Measures/Confirm Survey Instrument	
● You select a valid and reliable school climate survey (e.g., see the EDSCLS instruments and documentation).	● You do not assess school climate through a valid and reliable school climate survey.
● You collect multiple types of data to better understand the school's climate (e.g., conduct focus groups and interviews to better understand he context of the school climate survey data).	● You collect only one (if any) additional type of school climate data (e.g., only review incident data).
● The type of data you collect aligns with the definitions of school climate you developed during Activity Sets 1 and 2.	● You collect data from only one topic area of school climate (e.g., only data on school safety).
b. Collect Data	
● Administration protocols for data collection describe how to collect data in a consistent way across groups of stakeholders (e.g., protocols provide directions on how to administer data). For example, these are described in the *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)*.	● There are no administration protocols on how to collect the data (e.g., participants are not informed of the expectations of the data collection). Few stakeholders respond to the survey data.
● You collect survey data from the majority of your stakeholders (ideally above 80 percent).	● The data do not provide useful information to inform your school climate efforts.
● You can use the data you collected to assess what you intended (valid), and it is consistent across respondents (reliable).	● You do not protect or appear to protect privacy.
● Data collection procedures protect privacy.	● The school climate survey is administered with respondent identities disclosed. Respondents provide biased, inaccurate responses.
● The school climate survey is administered anonymously or in a manner to protect confidentiality in order to protect the respondent's personally identifiable information and encourage truthful and accurate responses.	

c. Analyze Data

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?
● The analysis includes disaggregating data by subpopulations of student, including possibly linking with student information system data (e.g., race, gender, English learner status, special education status). The EDSCLS platform does this.	● The analysis includes only aggregated information about the entire population (e.g., all students who participated).
● The analysis includes disaggregating data by stakeholder group (e.g., by teacher and student). The EDSCLS platform does this.	● You conduct the analysis only for one stakeholder group (e.g., not for staff).
● Data reports are developed for each type of data you collect (e.g., surveys, focus groups, administrative data) that provide information about strengths and areas of concern. The EDSCLS platform does this for the survey data.	● Data reports are confusing to stakeholders. ● Data reports are not actionable.
● The data reports are clear and actionable.	

d. Use Additional Resources

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?
● Resources from the Resource Package provide guidance on how to analyze and interpret the data analysis.	● You do not use resources to facilitate understanding of the data analysis.

e. Allow Stakeholders to Review Data

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?
● You share data with stakeholders.	● Data are not shared with stakeholders.
● Stakeholders receive support on how to interpret reports and ways to identify key findings of the data (e.g., you look across types of data to determine whether results are similar or relate to one another).	● Stakeholders do not receive sufficient support to know how to review the reports with a critical lens and use it (e.g., stakeholders receive only highly technical data reports).
● Members of your school community review the data reports and determine key takeaways from the data (e.g., what the school is doing well and what the school needs to do to improve).	● Stakeholders are not invited to help interpret the results (e.g., stakeholders receive only reports to review).

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COLLECTING, ANALYZING, AND REPORTING SCHOOL CLIMATE DATA?

- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual* section on collecting, analyzing, and reporting school climate data: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section3-EDSCLS for EDSCLS users or https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section3-NonEDSCLS for non-EDSCLS users. It breaks down these action steps further and includes additional strategies and resources for users of EDSCLS and other school climate surveys.

- Go to the ED School Climate Surveys: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls. The *Technical and Administration User Guide for the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)* provides information needed to learn more about the surveys and analysis and reporting platform.

- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 3*: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/On-line-Modules/3-Putting-Data in-Context. It provides an activity to practice putting your school climate data in context.

- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 4*: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/On-line-Modules/4-Prepping-Data-for-Communication. It provides an activity to practice integrating different data sources to understand your school climate.

- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 5*: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/On-line-Modules/5-Sharing-Data. It provides an activity to practice sharing your school climate data.

- Go to the *School Climate Data Interpretation Guide*: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Data-Interpretation-Resources /data-interpretation-guide. It provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various school climate survey data.

- Go to the *Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides*: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Data-Interpretation-Resources /discussion-guides. It provides information to assist with using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas overall and by a multi-tiered system of supports, as applicable.

- Go to the data sections of the *School Climate Improvement Action Guides* for each stakeholder: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/action-guides/section3. Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions
(ACTIVITY SET 4)

Why Are School Climate Interventions Important?

The fourth set of activities—choosing and implementing school climate interventions—provides strategies to implement school climate interventions. Interventions include specific practices with defined activities, policies, and initiatives; broad strategies, approaches, and best practices; as well as evidence-based programs and those with promising evidence. It is important to select interventions that meet your needs and that you can implement in your district. It also is important to provide the necessary supports to ensure successful implementation.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS

In the current activity set, compare the interventions you currently have with the needs your data identify in Activity Set 3. Use this crosswalk to help you determine which interventions to remove, modify, or implement as well as the types of resources and supports educators need to implement the interventions.

What Are the Key Things to Do?

Strategies and activities that will help you realize the goals of this activity set include the following:

a. **Review Current Interventions.** Review the interventions you are currently implementing and compare them with the needs you identified during your data collection and assess their effectiveness in your community.

b. **Review Potential Interventions.** Review evidence-based registries to identify those interventions that research has shown to be effective with your population of students. Potential registries include the What Works Clearinghouse from ED; youth.gov from the U.S. government, National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; Blueprints for Healthy Development from the University of Colorado–Boulder Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence; the *Model Programs Guide* from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention; and the *Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) Guide* for elementary, middle, and high school social and emotional learning programs.

c. **Determine Interventions to Implement.** Decide which interventions to implement that align with your school climate goals and meet your needs, which you identified with school climate data.

d. **Address Logistics.** Address the logistics, resources, support staff, and training needed to implement the interventions as intended.

e. **Implement Interventions.** Implement interventions, and continuously monitor their implementation, providing support to educators when they need it.

f. **Communicate With Stakeholders.** Continuously communicate with members of your school community about the implementation of interventions and any potential ways to support implementation.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?
a. Review Current Interventions	
● You identify current activities and interventions that address or affect the school climate (e.g., you identify how your current school improvement plan incorporates school climate).	● You do not identify current activities and interventions that address or affect the school climate (e.g., you skip reflecting on discipline policies that affect the school climate).
● You compare the school climate interventions to the needs identified during data collection to determine whether the current interventions meet needs.	● You do not compare current school climate interventions to the identified needs (e.g., you do not check whether interventions are needed within the district or school).
● You compare the school climate interventions to one another to determine whether there is overlap in goals (e.g., you determine whether more than one intervention aligns with a current school climate goal).	● You do not compare current interventions with one another (e.g., you do not determine whether multiple interventions support similar goals).
● You assess the effectiveness of current activities and interventions that are designed to address identified needs based on outcomes and implementation measures.	● You just assume the current activities interventions are working or are not working without analyzing outcome and implementation measures.
b. Review Potential Interventions	
● You review new interventions to implement that could be effective in addressing the identified needs with similar students and in settings such as the district and school.	● You select interventions without attention to evidence of effectiveness and fit.
● If the evidence base does not fit the needs, you review promising interventions with clear rationales as to why they may be effective in addressing the identified needs.	● When reviewing interventions, there is not a clear rationale as to why you might select an intervention and how the intervention will be effective at addressing the identified needs.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

c. Determine Interventions to Implement

● You select interventions using their definition of school climate (topic areas) and school climate data (identified needs) to coordinate and integrate efforts, as appropriate (e.g., use the review of current programs and of potential interventions).	● School climate interventions are not aligned or coordinated with one another and do not address all the goals of the efforts.
● You enhance implementation of interventions already implemented well (as evidenced through data analysis) and meet the goals of the school climate improvements.	● You do not support the implementation of current interventions that are implemented well and meet the goals.
● You modify implementation of interventions that meet the goals but may not be implemented effectively (as evidenced through data collection).	● You continue to implement interventions that meet goals but are not implemented well without additional supports.
● You remove interventions that are currently implemented but do not meet identified needs or align with school climate goals.	● You continue to implement interventions even though data demonstrate the interventions have not been effective and do not align with the goals.
● You implement new interventions if current interventions are not meeting all identified needs.	● You do not implement new interventions, even when there is a gap between interventions implemented and identified needs.

d. Address Logistics

● You identify the logistics and support needed to ensure effective implementation of the interventions, and efforts ensure that the district or school has the necessary resources to implement them as intended (e.g., the school has the necessary support staff to provide services to families).	● You choose interventions that the district or school does not have the necessary resources to implement effectively (e.g., not enough financial resources are available for sufficient staff to get trained after educators begin implementation).

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	**What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?**

e. Implement Interventions

● Educators implement interventions as intended.	● Educators select components of interventions to implement rather than implementing the full intervention.
● Educators, families, and community members receive support and feedback as they implement interventions (e.g., through observations, feedback loops, peer mentoring, and coaching).	● Educators implement the interventions in isolation and are left to their own devices (e.g., no one follows up with educators to determine whether they need support).
● School climate leaders continuously monitor how well educators implement selected interventions (e.g., combining monitoring with other tasks, including educator observations and structured walk-throughs).	● School climate leaders do not monitor fidelity of implementation (e.g., leaders do not determine whether interventions are implemented as intended or whether more resources and support are needed).
● Educators participate in job-embedded professional learning and have access to ongoing professional development and support (e.g., educators participate in school climate professional learning communities and have access to coaching).	● School climate leaders do not offer professional development and support to educators on an ongoing basis (e.g., educators receive a single professional development session on school climate).

f. Communicate With Stakeholders

● Stakeholders receive communication about the progress of implementation (e.g., stakeholders receive a newsletter about the efforts).	● Stakeholders do not receive updates about the progress of implementation (e.g., no updates are provided on the efforts underway).
● Stakeholders receive information about ways they can support the implementation of interventions (e.g., families can help monitor student community service).	● Stakeholders do not receive additional opportunities to support implementation (e.g., stakeholders are not invited back into the efforts after the data collection).

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DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CHOOSING AND IMPLEMENTING INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL CLIMATE?

- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual* section on choosing and implementing interventions: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section4. It breaks down these action steps further and includes additional strategies and resources.

- Go to *School Climate Improvement Online Module 6* on identifying and implementing interventions: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/Online-Modules/6-Ident-Imp-Interventions. It provides an activity to help think through how to choose an intervention.

- Go to the intervention sections of the *School Climate Improvement Action Guides* for each stakeholder: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/action-guides/section4. Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support the selection and implementation of interventions.

Monitoring and Evaluating School Climate Improvement Efforts
(ACTIVITY SET 5)

Why Are Monitoring and Evaluating Important?

Monitoring and evaluation provides information on how well your efforts are going to date, including how well you are implementing your school climate improvements and the impact of those improvements. The fifth set of activities—monitoring and evaluating the overall effort—helps you improve and assess your school climate efforts. Strategies and activities in this activity set help you assess your engagement strategies with stakeholders, the implementation of interventions, and the outcomes of these efforts.

> **CONNECTIONS TO OTHER ACTIVITY SETS**
>
> Activity Set 5 helps you synthesize the work conducted in the first four activity sets of your school climate improvements. The results will provide you with evidence on how you should refine your efforts in the next iteration.

What Are the Key Things to Do?

Strategies and activities that help you realize the goals of this activity set include the following:

a. **Plan to Assess.** Review the plan you developed during Activity Set 1 on how you evaluate your overall school climate effort, including process data (data that assess how well you implement interventions and strategies of your school climate efforts) and outcome data (data that assess the final result of your efforts; e.g., through survey data, behavioral incidents, attendance, and student social and emotional skills).

b. **Get Stakeholder Input.** Create opportunities for stakeholders to provide input into the evaluation of the effort and strategies to improve the effort in the next cycle.

c. **Identify Leading Indicators.** Ensure that you have some leading indicators (measures that can show whether you are moving in the right direction) to monitor from the start.

d. **Collect Additional Data.** Collect additional data, as needed, or leverage existing data, to evaluate your overall efforts. Data should be continuously collected before and after interventions to help adjust interventions and identify the need for new ones.

e. **Prepare a Year-End Report.** Prepare a year-end report to share with stakeholders about the overall school climate improvements. Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to review the year-end report along with the core planning team.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

a. Plan to Assess

- The logic model guides decisions on the data you will use to assess overall efforts (e.g., evaluation assesses what you intended to do and the outcomes you desired).
- The plan includes process data about how well you implemented the efforts and interventions (e.g., leverage data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation used for continuous quality improvement).
- The plan includes outcome data and a research design to determine whether efforts had their intended impact (e.g., leverage data collected during Activity Set 3).

- You select data to assess efforts without a clear purpose (e.g., you use only data you currently have for convenience).
- The plan does not include data to assess how well educators implement interventions and additional supports they may need to implement interventions well.
- The plan does not include outcome data (e.g., data are not provided to determine whether the efforts had the same effects across subgroups of students).

b. Get Stakeholder Input

- Stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their feedback about the school climate efforts (e.g., select a representative sample of stakeholders to gather their input).

- You gather stakeholder feedback from only one stakeholder group (e.g., you ask only teachers how they experienced the efforts and do not ask other staff, students, families, and community members).

c. Identify Leading Indicators

- There is a system to collect and analyze your leading indicator data (e.g., you collect data on how professional development is delivered so you can adjust the professional development to best support the implementation of school climate interventions).

- You wait until the end of the year to evaluate the climate efforts (e.g., you do not identify which of your measures are leading indicators).

d. Collect Additional Data

- You collect additional process and outcome data as needed to evaluate the overall efforts (e.g., leverage data you have previously collected and use protocols you have previously established to facilitate data collection).
- You collect data to assess the depth of support for and understanding of how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments.

- The additional data you collect do not provide the information that will help improve the efforts (e.g., ask informal questions during a staff meeting to assess efforts).
- You do not collect data to assess the depth of support for and understanding of how to create safe and supportive school and classroom environments.

What Does This Look Like When You Do the Work Well?	What Do You Want to Avoid? What Are Potential Pitfalls?

e. Prepare a Year-End Report

- The summary report summarizes process data in a way that allows stakeholders and the core planning team to make decisions about whether to continue, modify, or add interventions or practices to your school climate effort.

- The summary report summarizes outcome data in a way that allows stakeholders and the core planning team to determine whether the overall efforts are having their intended impact on students and the school climate in total and for subgroups.

- You conduct meetings that allow stakeholders to review the year-end report and provide input into the strategies that you will implement in the next cycle, using the process and outcome data.

- The summary of the process data is mostly a technical report, providing the data collection methods and the types of data collected.

- The summary of the outcome data is of the entire population rather than of subgroups.

- The district or school provides a summary report to stakeholders but does not engage stakeholders in the review of the report or plans for the upcoming year.

DO YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT MONITORING AND EVALUATING SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENTS?

- Go to the *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual* section on monitoring and evaluating school climate improvements: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/reference-manual/Section5. It breaks down these action steps further and includes additional strategies and resources.

- Go to the monitoring and evaluation sections of the *School Climate Improvement Action Guides* for each stakeholder: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/action-guides/section5. Each guide includes a section on how a stakeholder can support the monitoring and evaluation of school climate improvements.

School Climate Improvement Resource Package

The way schools and districts improve school climate varies. This *Quick Guide* is only a starting point. It includes a larger set of Web-based tools and resources called the Resource Package, which ED developed through the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. We have referenced many of the tools and resources in this *Quick Guide*. Whether you are new to the school climate improvement efforts or have already been implementing them, the Resource Package allows you to take a step back to assess what you are doing, how you are doing it, and what you have left to do in a comprehensive manner.

> You can use the Resource Package in conjunction with the *School Discipline Consensus Report*, which provides recommendations to support the necessary conditions for learning.

The Web-based Resource Package presents manageable, action-oriented, and evidence-based resources to help you with your effort to create a positive school climate. You can maneuver through the Resource Package content however you prefer through hyperlinks. For more information on the entire Resource Package, visit https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/SCIRP/About.

To support these efforts, the Resource Package includes this *Quick Guide* as well as the following:

- *School Climate Improvement Reference Manual*, which provides a comprehensive list of goals, strategies, outputs, and resources that correspond to the five activity sets for improving school climate;

- *School Climate Improvement Actions Guides* for each stakeholder—district leaders, school leaders, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, families, students, and community partners—that provide action steps on how each stakeholder can support school climate improvements, tips on what it looks like when the action steps are done well, and what to avoid;

- A *Data Interpretation Guide* that provides descriptions of and recommendations for using and interpreting various kinds of school climate survey data;

- *Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guides* to assist in using and interpreting data results for specific school climate topic areas, overall and on how to use these data to target interventions in a multi-tiered system of supports;

- A *Data Analysis Worksheet* that provides key questions EDSCLS users can utilize to guide analysis of their data;

- *Online Modules* that provide users with opportunities to practice skills; and

- *Assessment Tools* that helps you identify which resources would be most helpful to you and includes some pointers on what you should keep in mind as you work on making school climate improvements.

Introduction

Planning for School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 1)

Engaging Stakeholders in School Climate Improvements (ACTIVITY SET 2)

Collecting and Reporting School Climate Data (ACTIVITY SET 3)

Choosing and Implementing School Climate Interventions (ACTIVITY SET 4)

Monitoring and Evaluating the Overall Effort (ACTIVITY SET 5)

School Climate Improvement Resource Package

- The Resource Package accompanies the release of EDSCLS, which comprises a suite of surveys in a Web-based administration and reporting platform. Developed by ED's National Center for Education Statistics, EDSCLS provides states, districts, and schools with nationwide student, instructional and noninstructional staff, and parent/guardian surveys in a Web-based platform that allows for the collecting and reporting of school climate data across these stakeholders. However, all parts of the Resource Package are designed to support users of any valid and reliable school climate survey—not just those using EDSCLS.

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