

Title: A Study of the Relationship Between School
Climate and Adequate Yearly Progress

Author: Luke J. Lansberry

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Robert Millward

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Wenfan Yan
Dr. Cathy Kaufman

Creating and maintaining a positive school climate can affect an individual's attitude, their capacity to retain information, and their ability to perform at full potential within the school. In order to thoroughly understand the effectiveness of their educational program, school leaders must understand the role leadership and change has on the climate of the school and their school's ability to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This study explored the factors related to school climate that may or may not impact a school's ability to achieve AYP.

A survey was used to determine if there was a difference in school climate between 5 middle schools that have not achieved AYP for 4 consecutive years and 6 middle schools that did not achieve AYP for 3 consecutive years, but did achieve AYP in the fourth year.

Analysis of the survey results focused on the overall climate and 16 sub-categories. Six of the sub-categories related to teacher job satisfaction including: Role Conflict, Job Autonomy, Importance, Pressure, Work Group

Cooperation, and Esprit de Corps. Nine additional sub-categories related to how the principal influences the working climate and are identified as: Leader Support, Goal Emphasis, Work and Interaction Facilitation, Upward Interaction, Trust, Openness of Expression, Decision Making, and Planning Effectiveness. The final sub-category related to how teachers interact with students.

The researcher concluded that a one year positive change in Pennsylvania System of School Assessment scores may not have a dramatic effect on school climate. No significant difference was found for the overall climate in each of the 16 sub-categories in the schools. Although no statistical significant difference was found between the means in each sub-category, slightly more positive means were seen in 6 of the 16 sub-categories. In addition, chi-square revealed significant differences between the schools in 10 of the 67 survey statements. A close analysis of the differences between sub-categories and survey items for the schools allowed the researcher to draw several conclusions pertaining to the principal, the teachers, the impact of testing on student achievement, the need for close monitoring of school climate, and the importance of ensuring that teachers have autonomy.