

# **César Chávez Elementary School Climate Surveys Summary 2011-2012**

**Prepared by the CCE Climate Committee**

## **Summary Structure**

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## **1. Introduction of Surveys and Goals**

César Chávez Elementary School is a wonderful place for our children to explore and learn about the world around them. In choosing to be part of the Chávez community we have agreed to support our students as best we can. In an effort to promote positive social climate the CCE Climate Committee, with the assistance of Principal Beck, the teachers, staff, and parents, conducted three anonymous climate surveys in February 2012. The goals of the surveys were as follows:

- To understand the overall perception of school social climate including issues such as respect for others, pride and sense of community in our school, diversity, bullying, and safety
- To open dialogue among the staff, administration, and parents on positive approaches to social climate issues
- To create a common language when discussing issues such as bullying
- To assist the principal in using the results of the survey to evaluate school climate and make recommendations for addressing problems and reinforcing successful programs.

## **2. Student survey summary**

There were 325 students in grades 3 through 6 that participated in the climate survey. The survey was administered electronically in the computer lab using Survey Monkey. Although the students had the option of taking the survey in English and Spanish all the surveys were returned in English (although some of the fill in comments were in Spanish).

The overall perception of school climate was positive and includes some of the following statistics:

- 72% of 3-6 students report having at least 4 good friends at school
- 62% of 3-6 students report either often or always feeling close to people at school
- 74% of 3-6 students report either often or always feeling happy to be at school
- 73% of 3-6 students report either often or always feeling that there is an adult or teacher at school who cares about them
- 71% of 3-6 students report feeling accepted at school
- 85% of 3-6 students report either often or always feeling safe at school
- 61% of 3-6 students report they have not been bullied at school in the previous month (January 2012)
- 53% of 3-6 students report they did not witness bullying at school in the previous month (January 2012)

### **School Connectedness and Safety**

Students were asked a series of questions regarding their feelings about school including whether they believed adults/teachers at school cared about them, listened to them, and believed they could do a good job. Questions about school rules were also asked including whether students felt they could make decisions about rules and activities. A majority of students believed there was a teacher or other adult they could talk to at school when they had a problem. The overall perception was positive – students felt happy to be at school, had a positive relationship with staff, and felt safe. However:

- Students identified the playground, bathroom, and hallways as places where they did not feel safe.
- Students identified other students as the main reason for feeling unsafe.
- Students who felt unaccepted at school cited a variety of reasons including the most prevalent: how they look, clothing, gender, and grades.
- 10% of 3-6 students felt they were sometimes or always made to feel unaccepted because they behaved in a way that was different than the expectations for their gender.

## 2. Student survey summary (continued)

### Bullying

Students were asked a series of questions regarding their experiences being bullied or seeing others bullied. The students were given a very specific definition of bullying that reads:

*We say a student is being bullied when another student or several other students:  
Say mean and hurtful things, or make fun of him or her, or call him or her mean or hurtful names  
Completely ignore or exclude him or her from their group of friends or leave him or her out of things on purpose  
Hit, kick, push, shove around, or lock him or her inside a room  
Tell lies or spread false rumors about him or her or send mean notes/messages or try to make other students dislike him or her and do other hurtful things like that*

*When we talk about bullying, these things happen more than just once, and it is difficult for the student being bullied to defend himself or herself. We also call it bullying when a student is teased more than just once in a mean and hurtful way. But we do not call it bullying when the teasing is done in a friendly and playful way. Also, it is not bullying when two students of about equal strength or power argue or fight.*

A majority of students reported that they had not been bullied the month before (January 2012), those who had been bullied reported that verbal bullying was the most common form:

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### **If you were bullied, what did the bully do? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Hit, pushed, or kicked me on purpose	12.7%	39
Said mean things about me, teased me, or called me names	24.8%	76
Told lies or spread false rumors about me and tried to make others dislike me	9.8%	30
Took things that belong to me	5.2%	16
Did not let me join in what they were doing or said I could not be part of their group	11.4%	35
Threatened me or made me feel scared	2.6%	8
Sent mean or hurtful messages, calls, or pictures to my cell phone or over the Internet (computer)	1.3%	4
I was not bullied in the last month.	61.9%	190
	answered question	307
	skipped question	18

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## 2. Student survey summary (continued)

### Bullying (continued)

Students who reported being bullied responded in the following manner (they could choose more than one option) – the top three responses were to get help from an adult, tell the other child to stop, and ignoring it or walking away. Students also reported that when bullying did occur it occurred on the playground, the classroom, hallways, and the lunch area. The majority of students who had been bullied believed they had received some support in order to work out the problem.

Students who reported witnessing bullying reported that verbal bullying was the most common type of bullying followed by physical bullying and excluding children from a group or activity. The responses to witnessing bullying were varied (see below).

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#### **If you were bullied, what did you do? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
I got help from an adult at school	16.0%	49
I got help from another kid	7.5%	23
I got help from my parents	10.7%	33
I hit, kicked, or pushed the kid	1.0%	3
I said mean things, teased, or called the kid names	1.3%	4
I told the kid to stop	13.7%	42
I tried to stop the kid by saying or doing something funny	1.3%	4
I told the kid I agreed with what he or she said about me	2.0%	6
I said things to myself to help myself feel better	6.5%	20
I avoided the kid so I would not get hurt or teased again	10.1%	31
I did nothing	6.5%	20
I got upset	6.2%	19
I stayed calm	7.5%	23
I ignored it or walked away	13.4%	41
I was not bullied in the last month.	56.4%	173
Other (please describe)		12
answered question		307
skipped question		18

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#### **If you saw another student being bullied, what did the bully do? (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Hit, pushed, or kicked the kid on purpose	17.1%	52
Said mean things about the kid, teased the kid, or called the kid names	30.6%	93
Told lies or spread false rumors about the kid and tried to make others dislike the kid	10.2%	31
Took things that belong to the kid	9.2%	28
Did not let the kid join in what they were doing or said the kid could not be part of their group	14.1%	43
Threatened the kid or made the kid feel scared	7.9%	24
Sent mean or hurtful messages, calls, or pictures to the kid's cell phone or over the Internet (computer)	2.6%	8
I did not see any bullying at school.	55.6%	169
answered question		304
skipped question		21

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## **2. Student survey summary (continued)**

### **Comparison with California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS)**

The state of California conducts a survey of 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders to help prevent health-risk behaviors such as smoking and alcohol abuse, to promote positive youth development and well-being, and to foster positive school climates. The CCE Climate Committee, in an effort to engage with the state's CHKS, had replicated some of the questions from that survey to the CCE student survey for comparison. Please note that the CHKS only polls 5<sup>th</sup> graders whereas the data from the CCE Student Survey is grades 3-6. The CHKS data below is from the 2008-2009 and 2010-11 years, the most recent data available. The CCE Student Survey (CCESS) asked comparable questions to the CHKS and had the following outcomes:

#### **Question: Do you feel safe at school?**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHSK 08-09	60%	29%	6%	5%
CHKS 10-11	61%	28%	4%	7%
CCESS	64%	22%	12%	2%

#### **Question: Do you feel close to people in this school?**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	11%	65%	24%	0%
CHKS 10-11	23%	49%	26%	2%
CCESS	25%	37%	33%	4%

#### **Question: I am happy to be at this school.**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	41%	48%	10%	2%
CHKS 10-11	23%	49%	26%	4%
CCESS	25%	37%	21%	4%

#### **Question: The teachers at this school treat students fairly.**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	37%	46%	16%	2%
CHKS 10-11	39%	44%	16%	2%
CCESS	45%	39%	15%	2%

#### **Question: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who really cares about me.**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	57%	32%	11%	0%
CHKS10-11	51%	28%	21%	0%
CCESS	42%	32%	24%	2%

#### **Question: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who believes that I can do a good job.**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	70%	25%	5%	0%
CHKS 10-11	70%	18%	9%	4%
CCESS	57%	28%	13%	3%

#### **Question: I try to understand how other people feel.**

	Yes, all the time	Yes, most of the time	Yes, some of the time	No, never
CHKS 08-09	21%	44%	35%	0%
CHKS 10-11	30%	44%	23%	4%
CCESS	42%	41%	14%	3%

## **2. Student survey summary (continued)**

### **Comparison with 2009-2010 CCE Student Climate Survey**

The CCE Student Climate Survey conducted in 2009-2010 was a briefer survey that focused mostly on bullying. Although the ability to compare the current survey with that one is limited we do highlight a few items here. Please note that the definition of bullying for the two surveys was similar but not identical.

#### **Question: During the past month have you been bullied at school?**

	Never	<1 per week	1 time per wk	2-4 times per wk	5> times per week
2011-12	61%	22%	6%	7%	5%
2009-10	79%	15%	1%	3%	3%

#### **Question: What did the bully do? (Top 3 responses)**

2011-12	Verbal (24%), Physical (13%), Excluded (11%)
2009-10	Verbal (65%), Physical (18%), Told Stories (18%), Threatened/made scared (18%)

#### **Question: What did you do in response to the bullying? (Top 3 responses)**

2011-12	Got help from an adult at school (16%), Told the kid to stop (14%), Walked away/ignored it (13%)
2009-10	Told the kid to stop (35%), Walked away/ignored (24%), Stayed calm (22%)

#### **Question: Where did the bullying happen? (Top 3 responses)**

2011-12	Playground (28%), Classroom (14%), Lunchroom (7%)
2009-10	Playground (76%), Classroom (22%), Lunchroom (13%)

#### **Question: There are clear rules at our school.**

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
2011-12	3%	13%	34%	50%
2009-10	8%	9%	27%	56%

#### **Question: Teachers and staff make things better when they help someone who has been bullied or picked on.**

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
2009-10	6%	13%	34%	47%

#### **Question: Have you gotten the support you needed to work out the bullying problem that you have experienced in the past month?**

	Yes	Sort of yes/no	Not at all	I wasn't bullied
2011-12	16%	20%	5%	59%

## **2. Student survey summary (continued)**

### **Survey Critique**

While the overall construction and implementation of the climate survey went well the committee, with input from parents and staff, have identified the following areas for improvement:

- Concerns that the third graders were unable to adequately answer certain questions because they did not understand the questions. Would give 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teachers a more detailed prompt for delivering the survey.
- Concerns that some teachers did not know the survey was also available in Spanish. It is suggested that next year's survey have all questions in both English and Spanish on the same survey.
- A small number of students skipped several questions. Require that all questions be mandatory.
- Concerns that students wouldn't understand how to answer the question on ethnicity/race. We were interested to see how students would respond to this question and believe the answers were fairly representative of the school. Those who were not sure were able to choose, "I don't know."

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#### **I am (check all that apply)**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Arab or Arab American	1.3%	4
Asian American	9.4%	28
African American	6.7%	20
Hispanic or Latino	19.4%	58
Native American or American Indian	3.0%	9
White	50.5%	151
I don't know	26.1%	78
Other (please describe)		36
	answered question	299
	skipped question	26

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### **3. Parent survey summary**

There were 466 surveys filled out by Kinder through 6 parents and guardians (one per child), 450 were in English and 16 in Spanish. The climate committee was very pleased with the response rate which was above 75%. The survey was available electronically through Survey Monkey for 2 weeks in February 2012 and also in paper copy in the school office.

Like the student survey, the overall perception of school climate was positive and includes some of the following statistics:

- 89% of K-6 parents believe there are always or often clear rules at the school.
- 89% of K-6 parents believe adults at the school either always or often treat the students fairly.
- 87% of K-6 parents believed the school often or always tries to make everyone feel included.
- 61% of K-6 parents believe their child is accepted at school.
- 67% of K-6 parents believe the staff at the school often or always respects each other and works together.
- 54% of K-6 parents believe their child had not been bullied in the past month (January 2012).
- 90% of K-6 parents report their child was not afraid to go to school in the past month (January 2012)

### **School Connectedness and Safety**

Parents were asked the same types of questions as the students regarding school connectedness and safety including the perceptions of school as a welcoming place, the physical upkeep of the school, and whether students and staff have respect for each other. Overall the outcomes were similar to the student survey and were quite positive.

- Parents identified other students as the main reason why they believed their child felt unsafe.
- Parents who believe their child felt unaccepted at school cited a variety of reasons including the most prevalent: how they look, clothing, and gender.
- 18% of completed K-6 parent surveys noted their child was sometimes or always made to feel unaccepted because they behaved in a way that was different than the expectations for their gender.



### **3. Parent survey summary (continued)**

#### **Bullying**

Parents were asked a series of questions regarding their child's experiences being bullied and were given the same definition as the students.

A majority of parents reported that their child had not been bullied in the past month and 25% responded that their child had been bullied less than 1 time per week. The parents cited verbal bullying as most prevalent followed by exclusion (in much higher proportion than the 3-6 students) and then physical bullying as third.

36% of parents did not know if the teachers and staff helped if they saw someone bullied or harrassed while 43% believed the teachers and staff often or always helped. 40% of parents did not know if the teachers and staff made things better when they helped while 39% believed teachers/staff often or always made things better.

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**During the past month Has your child been bullied at school?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
never	54.0%	222
less than 1 time per week	24.8%	102
1 time per week	6.6%	27
2-4 times per week	4.4%	18
5 or more times per week	0.2%	1
I don't know	10.0%	41
	answered question	411
	skipped question	39

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**Durante el mes pasado ¿Alguna vez fue intimidado/ acosado su hijo en la escuela?**

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
nunca	75.0%	9
menos de una vez por semana	16.7%	2
1 vez por semana	0.0%	0
de 2 a 4 veces por semana	8.3%	1
5 o más veces por semana	0.0%	0
	answered question	12
	skipped question	4

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### **3. Parent survey summary (continued)**

#### **Parent Comments and Concerns**

Parents and guardians were given the opportunity to write in comments on several questions. The responses to those questions are aggregated here and put into different themes.

In general, parents' written responses to types of bullying were consistent. A total of 18 out of 450 parent respondents described six different forms of bullying experienced by their children at CCE. These classifications ranged from exclusion, intimidation, physical harm, stolen property, verbal expression, to unspecified. For these parent, exclusion, intimidation, and verbal abuse were the most prevalent manifestations and were equally expressed at CCE. They sited physical harm as occurring less frequently than these three main types of bullying.

Parents were not as consistent when identifying possible reasons for their children's unacceptance at CCE. A total of 70 out of 450 parents discussed possible reasons why other CCE students rejected their children. For over 28% of these parents, their children's individual habits, personality types, and developmental issues exposed them to rejection and harassment by their peers. Another 13% cited friendship groups as a critical source of mistreatment. According to these respondents, their children were occasionally denied inclusion either within their own social grouping or from various "cliques", including the "popular crowd". While this was a concern mostly for girls, over 15% of respondents mentioned boys excluding one another based on perceived lack of athletic ability, especially on the playground.

In terms of larger causes, less than 5% of parent survey takers offered racial and/or ethnic background or family beliefs and practices as potential sources of rejection. Moreover, almost 3% of respondents identified class differences or non-traditional family structures as contributing to their children's lack of acceptance. Interestingly almost a quarter of parent respondents either did not know why their children were targeted or reluctantly accepted their children's exclusion as an inevitable part of growing up.

### **3. Parent survey summary (continued)**

#### **Parent Comments and Concerns (continued)**

Of all three occasions to share written comments, parents were the most vocal about ways to improve school climate.

These suggestions could be separated into five categories:

- school personnel and grounds
- social relations
- school policy
- playground interactions
- and general feedback

The largest percentage of respondents (35.7%) focused on changing or reforming school policy. These parents suggested greater implementation of conflict resolution programs, such as Kelso's Choices; better communication between school and home; and more opportunities to encourage leadership and parent involvement to support community building. They also called attention to increasing diversity in the school curriculum and reforming the racial/ethnic categorization of students.

The next common concern for parents was playground issues. Almost 30% of respondents suggested more adult supervision, more training for lunch and yard duty personnel, and clearer policies about before and after school playground use. Respondents followed playground-related concerns with ideas about how to improve school personnel and grounds and social relations in the school. Some supported more training for teachers and staff on how to identify and prevent bullying and the need for a counselor. Parents also shared their distress about social relations at CCE, in particular girl bullying and attendant problems of gossiping and disrespectful language.

#### **4. Staff survey summary**

There were 28 surveys filled out by the school staff and all the surveys were filled out in English. The survey was available electronically through Survey Monkey in February 2012 and the staff took the survey during a staff meeting.

Like the student and parent surveys, the overall perception of school climate was positive and includes some of the following statistics:

- 82% of the staff who answered the survey are certified teachers.
- 92% of the staff believes adults at the school either always or often treat the students fairly.
- 77% of the staff believed the school often or always tries to make everyone feel included.
- 55% of the staff believe the staff at the school often or always respects each other and works together.
- 74% of the staff believe the staff and parents respect each other and work together often or always..
- 70% of the staff believe the school is always or often a welcoming place.

#### **School Connectedness and Safety**

The staff was asked the same types of questions as the students and parents regarding school connectedness and safety including the perceptions of school as a welcoming place, the physical upkeep of the school, and whether students, parents, and staff have respect for each other. Overall the outcomes were similar to the other surveys with a few differences:

- 44% of the staff felt that the staff at the school respect and work together only sometimes.
- 48% of the staff feels they often allow students to help make class rules.
- 100% of the staff feels they always or often tell a student when he or she has done a good job.
- 88% of the staff believe students are always or often safe at school.
- If a child felt unsafe, the staff believed (57% of the time) that it was another student who made the child feel unsafe.

#### **Bullying**

The staff was asked a series of questions regarding their perceptions of bullying at the school and were given the same definition as the students and parents.

- 26% of staff did not witness bullying in the past month (January 2012)
- 33% of staff witnessed less than 1 time per week
- 19% of staff witnessed 1 time per week
- 22% of staff witnessed 2-4 times a week
- 0% of staff witnessed 5 or more times per week

## **4. Staff survey summary (continued)**

### **Bullying (continued)**

The staff identified the same kind of bullying as the students and parents (they could check more than one answer).

72% verbal bullying

40% exclusion

36% physical bullying

In general the staff felt capable of identifying different types of bullying (physical, verbal, social, etc) but less adept at coaching a bully or bullied child. Most staff felt capable of helping a child manage strong emotions. In subsequent conversations with the staff it became clear that some staff believed they could coach the children on issues of bullying but lacked the time in the classroom setting to do so.

### **Staff Comments and Concerns**

The staff echoed many of the concerns identified by parents including the desire to have a counselor on site who could assist with problems when they arose. Staff also were enthusiastic about the new Playworks program and hoped for a school-wide assembly regarding Playworks and how the games work.

There was a sense that the school needs more whole school activities to build community and reinforce positive traits such as empathy and gratitude.

The staff also identified the need for a vice principal or to reduce the number of students to make the school more manageable.

Staff also recommended an immediate plan of action or tools students could use to know how to handle bullying such as the Kelso's Choices program. Staff also thought they could benefit from more training to identify bullying and how to handle it. However, the staff noted that parents also needed to understand the differences between disagreements between friends and bullying.

The staff would appreciate an outline or list of school-wide expectations, norms, and procedures to clarify how discipline is to be handled.