



Climate Committee Final Report 2013-2014

César Chávez Elementary School

Summary

The 2013-14 CCE Climate Committee continued to work on projects from last year including the climate survey, parenting workshops, and transition teams. The committee also began a new project - the redesign of the first grade playground area.

Committee Projects

The Climate Survey

Three separate climate surveys were administered in February 2014 to parents, staff, and students in grades 3 through 6. The surveys, which were available in both Spanish and English, measured perceptions and experiences related to school connectedness, friendship, conflict/bullying, and safety. The committee was pleased with the overall participation which included 52% of parents, 19 staff members, and 344 students. Data from the climate surveys was shared at the April and May climate meetings.

The committee will continue to work on the data for future use as well and has posted a report that is available for download on the SIPAT website: <http://www.ccesipat.com/index.cfm/programs/climate-committee/>. The climate surveys will continue to appear on the school's official community calendar as a way of alerting parents and staff that the survey will take place again in February 2015. The committee has administered the same survey for three years and feels it is time to amend the survey to address other concerns. The school district is also creating a task force for the coming school year to explore a district wide survey instrument.

Counselor Hire and Kelso's Choices Program

Katherine Allgood was hired once again to be the school counselor. Her position was entirely funded by SIPAT and constituted 13 hours per week. Sra. Allgood began her work re-introducing the Kelso's Choices program for K through 3 students. She continued her work with 4-6 grade students by going to each of the classes and discussing problem solving and friendship skills. Sra. Allgood also did small group work with grade levels 1-6 on topics such as anger management, family problems, and problem solving.

Promoting Student-School Connectedness, Social Skills, Healthy Students

Student Council: The student council continued to support student engagement and school spirit with assemblies, school spirit days, a book sale, STEAC food drive and other activities. The Climate Committee wishes to thank the student council for helping promote the climate survey to parents with their thermometer posters. The committee recognized the hard work of CCE teachers Sara Caulfield, Lynn Angelo, and Darlene Loyola for guiding the student council through various activities including leadership training, the choosing of a school mascot, spirit days, and other special events.

Playworks: The Climate Committee recognizes the hard work of Raychel Kubby Adler and other parents and staff for bringing and implementing the Playworks program to our school. The program has given students a new perspective on play and broadened their social skills sets as well. This year Raychel was once again able to bring 4-6 grade peer helpers to assist with the games. This has made the program very successful as both an activity and also a way to build leadership skills. Raychel will be stepping down as Playworks coordinator for next year.

Parent Resource Library: The climate committee has begun work on a resource library where parents could check out books about parenting and childhood issues. The committee will continue to solicit for book donations through the next school year and will help create a space for the library to be housed. We wish to thank Lisa Baumeister for her continued efforts to work with the school and local business to make this happen.

Parent Concerns

Throughout the year the climate committee fielded concerns and questions from parents regarding the experiences of the students at the school. The committee discussed and attempted to address concerns as was possible and to help parents find both appropriate channels for their concerns and resolutions for their children. The committee noted these concerns among others:

1. Kindergarten parents felt alienated from the larger school community and did not feel well informed of school activities.
2. Parents were unhappy with the state of the playground and noted that it took a very long time for the blacktop to be repainted and the basketball hoops to be fixed (although they still do not have nets)
3. Parents were concerned about the recess environment being too restrictive in some ways and not structured enough in others and that there were too many rules and rule changes.
4. A continued need for parental involvement with first grade lunch supervision and a need for supervising parents to have training.
5. Parents expressed concerns about bullying incidents at the school that they felt were not properly addressed by the staff or administration.
6. The committee was contacted regarding a scheduling conflict with the MME auction

Transition from MME

The transition of students from MME to CCE has been effected by the changes occurring at MME's Spanish Immersion program. In the past a number of fourth graders would move to CCE since MME's program was K through 3. This year there were 12 students transitioning to CCE from many different grades and not just fourth grade. Sra. Beck held information meetings and school tours for the incoming families. The climate committee facilitated buddy families and held a welcome picnic at the beginning of the school year. It is unclear whether any students will be transitioning next year.

Transition to First Grade Playground Supervision

The transition from the self-contained kindergarten play yard to the “big play ground” is daunting for some students at the beginning of first grade. This year 1st grade parent Ashley Giovannettone coordinated first grade parents to be volunteer lunch supervisors. In an effort to ease the transition, Sra. Beck had the first grade students eat inside the cafeteria for the first few weeks, without the 2nd and 3rd graders. This practice helped to alleviate some of the stress with transitioning and provided a shadier and cooler lunch environment. The committee thanks Ashley for her efforts this year. Next year's supervisor will be Lisa Severino.

Playground Re-design

The climate committee and Sra. Beck discussed a plan to alter the playground landscape underneath the shade trees where first graders tend to congregate (by the first grade play structure). Parent Mark Damesyn contacted the landscape design department at UC Davis who sent senior Eric Xu to conduct his senior honors thesis on the issue.

Eric visited CCE on several occasions, spoke with students, staff, and parents regarding the landscape redesign, and conducted independent research. Throughout the spring he consulted with the school regarding his project (please see the meeting minutes for details) and presented three different playscape ideas that foster creative and diverse play using natural materials. Eric's final presentation will be at UC Davis on June 12. From that point forward it is the responsibility of the school and district to see Eric's plans materialize. The Climate Committee thanks Eric for all his work and also looks forward to assisting the school in realizing the new play area.

DJUSD Climate Committee

We continue to pursue and appreciate opportunities to share best school climate practices and collaborate with other Climate Committee leaders in the district. This year the District Climate Committee meetings have focused on educating climate leaders about the new Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP) and beginning to explore the role site Climate Committees might play in this new state funding structure. For information about LCAP, please visit the DJUSD website at <http://www.djUSD.k12.ca.us/>. The District is also looking to create a district wide survey instrument to get a consistent picture of school climate across school sites. We have shared our CCE Climate survey and results in an effort to help the district move forward with this planning.

SIPAT and the Climate Committee

During this school year we were pleased to have a diverse membership on the climate committee including an administrator, teacher and several parents. Amy Duffy & Anastasia Panagakos co-chaired the committee for the fourth year. The climate committee and SIPAT have created a close working relationship and several climate committee members attended the SIPAT general meetings to give updates and gather feedback. SIPAT helped spread the word and encourage participation in the climate surveys and is now hosting the Climate Committee's webpage on their website. SIPAT and Climate Committee have also worked closely (and successfully!) in hiring the school counselor. The climate committee is pleased with the close relationship with SIPAT and hopes this will continue.

Future Ideas

1. Continue to fund the CCE Counselor, and expand her role and increase her hours on site as we are able.
2. Build parent & counselor resource libraries.
3. Implement Eric Xu's creative playscape ideas for the first grade play area
4. Participate in District Climate Committee meetings and collaborate with other site climate committees.
5. Facilitate the transition of students to first grade
6. Continue to improve on the climate surveys
7. Explore the idea of a buddy bench
8. Stay engaged with the Davis Safe Routes improvements

Conclusion

The 2013-14 school year was, overall, a productive year for the climate committee. We continued working on several long-term projects such as the climate survey, student council, and school-wide counseling support. The committee also continues to bring parents and school staff together and provide a format to share ideas and concerns about school climate, and intentionally look for new opportunities to build a safe, positive, inclusive school community. We hope that next year's climate committee members will continue this work, implement some of the new ideas, and also attract new members. The committee will also see a change in leadership, Amy Duffy is stepping down as co-chair and will be succeeded by Sylvia Kwon. Thank you to Amy for all her work and commitment to the climate committee and welcome Sylvia!

Comments or questions about this report may be directed to:

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