



School Connectedness

Competency

Educator demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between school connectedness and school climate and the role they play in creating a positive learning and teaching environment.

Key Method

The educator researches and investigates the components necessary to establish a positive school environment by developing a campus-wide connected community.

Method Components

One factor that has a significant impact on school success and reduction in risk-taking behaviors, including involvement in bullying behaviors, is school connectedness. In other words, the more students feel connected to school staff, the less likely they are to engage in risk-taking behavior, including bullying.

Seven Factors of School Connectedness

School connectedness is the feeling that students are part of the school community. Seven factors are associated with school connectedness.

1. A sense of belonging
2. Liking school
3. A good circle of friends
4. Engagement in academic programs
5. Discipline that is fair and effective
6. Participation in extracurricular activities
7. Supportive and caring school staff

Of these seven factors, educators have the most direct control over the last one—being supportive and caring. Educators can make a significant difference in students' lives and behavior by being supportive, caring, and inclusive adults in our schools and communities.

Researchers and practitioners have consistently found that students' ability to form strong, close bonds with school personnel is associated with higher academic achievement, better social-emotional functioning, and less involvement in delinquent behaviors. It's essential to start talking about how educators can improve school climate and school connectedness when considering the implementation of strategies that can reduce bullying, sexual harassment, and other forms of peer victimization in our schools.

Establishing a positive school culture and a sense of school connectedness

Educators play a crucial role in shaping a positive school climate, essential for effective learning and student well-being. To enhance your understanding and impact in this area, engaging with several key resources is important.

- Watch the video A Day Without an ESP.
- Become familiar with the “Aspects of School Climate” by reading “What is School Climate” in the NEA Bully Free Schools Summit Book.
- Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from your perspective.
- Read “How is School Climate Measured” in the NEA Bully Free Schools Summit Book.
- Identify areas of concern with your school's climate from the student's perspective.
- Read “How Do We Improve School Climate?” in the NEA Bully Free Schools Summit Book.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Cornell, Dewey, and Limber, Susan P. (2015). "Law and policy on the concept of bullying at school." *American Psychologist*, 70 (4), 333–43. Web.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2015-20405-005>

Rigby, K., and Slee, P. T. (2008). Interventions to reduce bullying. *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 20, 165–83

http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/Bullying_Prevention_Strategies

[in_Schools_Ken_Rigby.pdf](#)

Resources

School Climate and Connectedness

 [A Day Without Education Support Professionals \(ESP\)](#)

 [Bully_Free_School_Climate_Summit_Book.pdf](#)

[Guiding Principles: A Resource Guide for Improving School Climate and Discipline](#)

[National School Climate Center](#)

[School Climate & Culture](#)

Assessing School Climate

[School Climate Survey Compendium | National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments](#)

[Step-by-Step Help Sheet for the GLSEN Tool](#)

Bullying, Peer Roles, and Safe Responses

[Bystanders Are Essential to Bullying Prevention and Intervention | StopBullying.gov](#)

[Support the Children Involved | StopBullying.gov](#)

[How to Be an Advocate for Bullied Students | NEA](#)

[Recognizing the First Signs of Bullying | NEA](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must earn a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and be proficient in all components of Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

400-500 words

Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answer the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. What background information is vital to understand your school's context?
 - Consider population, demographics, relevant cultural information, and any special considerations regarding student characteristics. Be mindful not to reveal anything confidential.
2. Review at least three resources from the resource section. One of your selections may be the video “A Day Without Educational Professionals.” Using ideas from the resources, explain how school climate and school connectedness can help prevent bullying. Describe how educators and education support professionals in different roles contribute to a safe, welcoming, and connected school community. What actions or practices appear most important in your educational setting?

Passing: The response describes the candidate’s role and educational setting, explains the connection among school climate, school connectedness, and bullying prevention, and describes how educators and education support professionals contribute to a safe and connected school community. The response uses ideas from at least three resources and is clear and easy to understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **four** artifacts to prove your learning.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Aspects of School Climate

100 -200 words

Using the “Aspects of School Climate Chart,” rate your school for each of the

following categories on a scale of 1–5 (1 is a low rating and 5 is high) and provide evidence.

- Relationships
- Respect for diversity
- School participation
- Emotional safety
- Physical safety
- Substance use
- Physical environment
- Academic environment
- Wellness
- Disciplinary environment

Artifact 2: School Climate Survey

200 - 300 words

After reviewing the “How School Climate is Measured” section in the NEA Bully Free School Climate Summit Book in the resource section above, administer a climate survey to your students, then evaluate their responses. High school-level students could use the GLSEN tool.

Provide a link or document that includes the questions asked in the survey. Submit a reflection about creating this survey with your audience in mind. You may have information about the age, grades, or language and reading levels of those taking the survey and how each question relates to a climate category.

Artifact 3: Three Completed Student Surveys

Artifact 4: Analysis

250-350 words

Compare and contrast your perceptions of the school with the students'. Utilize and give examples from the survey responses. Respond to the following:

- What is similar in your and your students' perspectives?
- What differs between your and your students' perspectives?
- What current school policies and initiatives might have contributed to these survey results?

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Aspects of School Climate Part 1	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for each of the 10 categories.	All 10 subcategories are rated, and specific examples are provided for fewer than 10 categories.	None of the 10 subcategories are rated, and no specific examples are provided for any of the 10 categories.
Artifact 2: School Climate Survey	Climate survey is the appropriate length and style for your students. Reflection on the process is thorough.	Clarify whether the climate survey or the process reflection is needed.	Climate survey and reflection are missing.
Artifact 3: Three Completed Surveys	All three student surveys are submitted.	Some student surveys are submitted.	No student surveys are submitted.
Artifact 4: Analysis	Analysis is thorough. Writing is clear and easy to understand.	Analysis is not thorough, or writing isn't clear.	Analysis is missing.

Part 3 Reflection

250-350 words

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Reflect on your investigation of school connectedness. Describe 5 changes your campus can make to promote a more positive school climate. Be specific in your rationale, connecting it to the research, survey results, and analysis.
2. How did your students' perspectives change your thinking about your current school culture?
3. What actions can you take to contribute to a more positive school climate?

Passing: Reflection shows shifts in thinking based on students' perspectives and cites specific examples from student surveys. Educator self-reflects on steps they can take now to contribute to a more positive school culture.