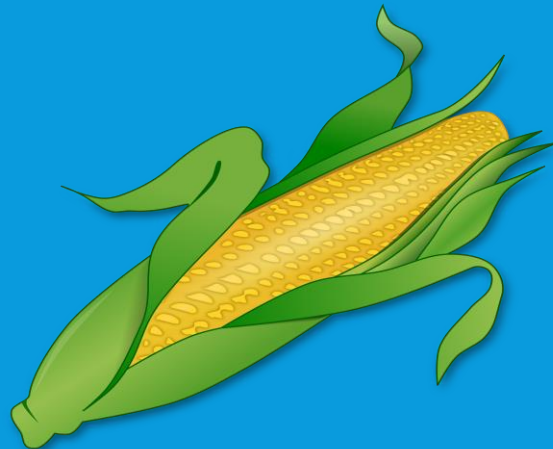# LEARNING FORWARD NEW JERSEY

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FIVE STEPS
…….TO A BETTER SCHOOL CLIMATE

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GOAL

·WALT understand five <u>priority</u> building blocks for a better school climate.

#1 – ESTABLISH AND SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOL CLIMATE TEAM

The Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights establishes a School Safety Team to:

"Develop, foster, and maintain a positive **school climate** by focusing on the **on-going, systemic process and practices** in the school and to address **school climate** issues **such as** harassment, intimidation, or bullying."

SCT = PLC

A Professional Learning Community = educators committed to working together **using processes of inquiry, problem-solving and reflection <u>upon their practice</u>** become a professional learning community. A professional learning community is a team or group of teams working interdependently to achieve a common goal for which members hold themselves mutually accountable. (DuFour 2006)

#2 BUILD A WORKING DEFINITION OF SCHOOL CLIMATE

With input from all school stakeholders, come to a clear and common understanding of what school climate is?

What does it look like?

Sound like?

Feel like?

WHAT IS SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE?

#3 ASSESS YOUR CURRENT REALITY

What assumptions are alive in your school?

Let's consider 4 sets of relationships.

What's already in place? Disjointed?

How can you gather and analyze school climate data?

CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS
WHICH ONES ARE ALIVE IN YOUR SCHOOL?

- ✓ School climate will fix itself.

- ✓ There needs to be little alignment between the expectations for students and the expectations for adults.

- ✓ Addressing negative adult behavior will cause more problems.

- ✓ A mission statement does not impact practice or climate.

SCHOOL CLIMATE - RELATIONSHIPS

- Student to Student
- Student to Adult
- Adult to Student
- Adult to Adult

CLIMATE FOR STUDENTS

o A **physical environment** that is welcoming and conducive to learning

- A **social environment** that promotes communication and interaction

- An **affective environment** that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem

- An **academic environment** that promotes learning and self-fulfillment

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CLIMATE FOR ADULTS

- A **physical environment** that is welcoming and conducive to learning

- A **social environment** that promotes communication and interaction

- An **affective environment** that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem

- An **academic environment** that promotes learning and self-fulfillment

A CLIMATE FOR ADULT LEARNING

- Civil
- Congenial
- Contrived Congenial
- Collegial

DISJOINTED PROGRAMS: A MAJOR BARRIER TO SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT

1. **What is the goal of the program, approach or initiative? What need is it addressing?**

2. **Is it achieving that goal and effectively addressing the need? What data supports our answer?**

3. **Decide to keep, modify or abandon**

4. **If you keep - clarify the purpose and the connection to an overall school climate improvement plan**

Focus on PROCESS, not Programs

WHAT IS YOUR ...CURRENT REALITY?

Looking at Data:

1. School Climate Surveys **(NJDOE+)**

2. Attendance data

3. Grade distributions

4. Disciplinary referrals

5. Bullying reports

6. I&RS referrals

7. Other data

    Focus groups – ex. discussion of assumptions, etc.

#4 SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING

What do we expect students to know/understand/do in terms of social and emotional(SEL)?

NJDOE SEL COMPETENCIES

EFFECTIVE SEL PROGRAMS

- All staff members are trained.

- Skills are taught consistently by all staff creating a common language related to expectations for behavior

- Skills are connected to the student code of conduct and discussions related to discipline

- Instruction is integrated into the curriculum across grade levels and content areas

- Skills are assessed to determine program effectiveness

- Parents are trained

#5 DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN

- Prioritize the areas of concern – do these relate to any commonly held assumptions?

- How will your team help stakeholders change their perspective?

- What areas of strength can be leveraged?

- Create a plan to address areas of concern that includes the specific goal, the people responsible, a timeline, assessment tools and an intended outcome

- Anticipate roadblocks and be proactive

- Focus on clarity around the evidence of success

Build a sense of community among the students and adults in your school!

Thank you! Have a great summer.