Cultural Competency Brief

November 2010

The following report presents a description of items from AISD 2009-2010 climate surveys that have addressed cultural competence in the district. The items chosen for this report measure campus staff, central office staff, parent, and/or student perceptions of: bullying, racial tension, discrimination, respect in the work place/school/classroom, sexual harassment, unsafe practices, work group morale, teacher fairness, and cultural relevance of curriculum. Longitudinal data were provided when available.

Campus Staff Climate Survey

This survey measures campus employees' perceptions of several dimensions of school climate. The 2009-2010 staff climate survey was administered in Fall 2009 and completed by 7,276 employees. Two items measuring the frequency staff reported observing undesirable student behaviors on their campus are particularly relevant to cultural competency.

Figure 1. How often does student bullying occur at your school?

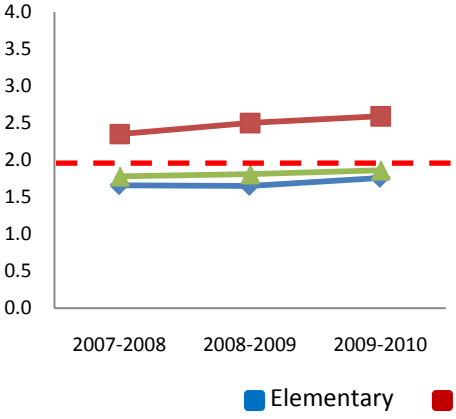
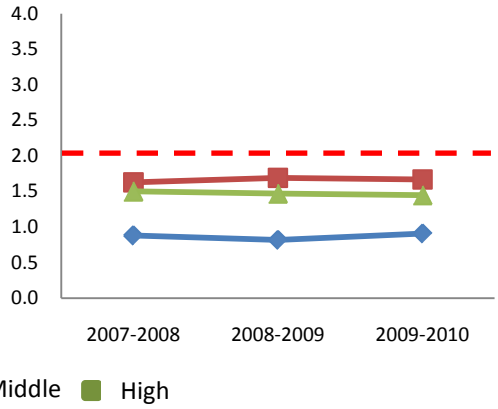


Figure 2. How often does racial tension occur at your school?



Elementary Middle High

Note. Responses were rated on a scale of 0 (never happens) to 4 (happens daily), with desirable responses averaging less than 2.0.
Source. 2009-2010 AISD staff climate survey

At the middle school level, staff reported more frequency of bullying than at the elementary and high school levels; furthermore, the increase in frequency of bullying in middle school from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010 is statistically significant. Staff reports of racial tension are low across all levels, especially in elementary school.

Central Office Climate Survey

This survey was developed to monitor staff treatment and work environment in Central Office. In 2009-2010, all non-campus employees (n=948) were invited to participate and 348 completed the survey. The survey measures nine areas of the work environment, and the behavioral environment subscale, which measures prevalence of negative behavior in the work place, is particularly relevant to cultural competency.

What is cultural competence?

Cultural competence is an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. It comprises four components:

1. Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
2. Attitude towards cultural differences
3. Knowledge of different cultural practices and world views
4. Cross-cultural skill

Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (E3 Alliance Blueprint for Educational Change).

What does AISD currently know about cultural competence?

AISD has collected a variety of survey data over the past several years. The following surveys contain items related to cultural competence:

- Campus Staff Climate Survey
- Central Office Climate Survey
- Student Climate Survey
- Parent Survey

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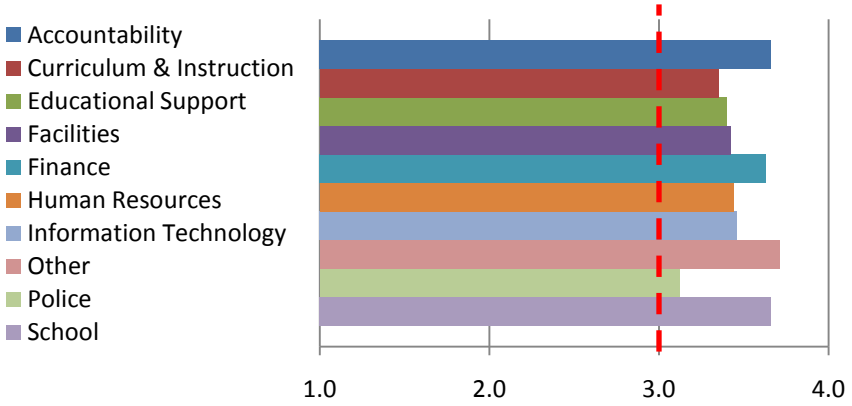
Figure 3. Behavioral environment subscale averages by department.



Note. Responses were rated on a scale from 1 (unfavorable environment) to 4 (favorable environment). Scores of 3.0 or higher are considered to be "positive," scores between 2.5 and 3.0 are "fair," and scores below 2.5 are "not positive."
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

Across all departments, average behavioral environment scores were positive; however, the police department reported the lowest rating among central office departments.

Table 1. Behavioral environment subscale ratings by item across departments

Behavioral environment	**Accountability**	**Curriculum & Instruction**	**Educational Support**	**Facilities**	**Finance**	**Human Resources**	**Information Technology**	**Other**	**Police**	**School**
I have experienced discrimination while employed at AISD	3.13	2.77	2.98	3.00	3.26	2.82	2.96	3.41	2.67	3.00
Racial tension	3.88	3.50	3.42	3.85	3.78	3.63	3.79	3.77	3.54	3.79
Bullying	3.66	3.40	3.42	3.70	3.79	3.47	3.41	3.77	3.39	3.79
Disrespect for supervisors	3.51	3.37	3.39	3.25	3.51	3.28	3.53	3.58	2.94	3.78
Disrespect for co-workers	3.35	3.15	3.32	2.73	3.29	3.20	3.28	3.48	2.76	3.42
Unsafe practices	3.93	3.73	3.79	3.55	3.91	3.81	3.72	3.85	2.94	3.96
Sexual harassment	3.95	3.87	3.92	3.48	3.96	3.92	3.95	3.95	3.78	3.96
Discrimination	3.85	3.43	3.74	3.48	3.87	3.50	3.74	3.85	3.25	3.74

Note. Items were initially rated on a scale from 1 (never happens) to 5 (happens daily). For consistency and to simplify interpretation, items were subsequently rescaled from 1 (unfavorable environment) to 4 (favorable environment).
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

It is important to note when looking at ratings for each item separately, that Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Support, Human Resources, Information Technology, and Police made more endorsements of a "fair" than a "positive" environment in terms of workplace discrimination. Furthermore, in general, the police department gave the lowest ratings to behavioral environment items.

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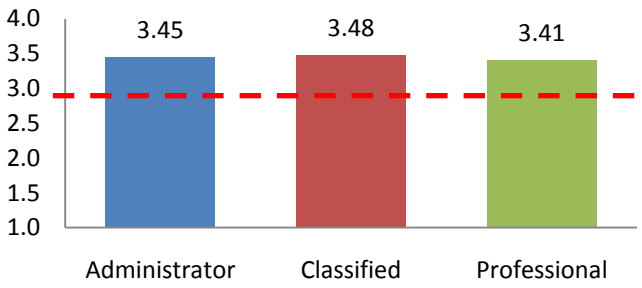
Responses to the Central Office climate survey reveal few differences among employee types in ratings of behavioral environment.

Figure 4. Behavioral environment subscale by job category



Note. Responses were coded on a scale from 1 (unfavorable environment) to 4 (favorable environment). Scores of 3.0 or higher are considered to be "positive," scores between 2.5 and 3.0 are "fair," and scores below 2.5 are "not positive."
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

Overall, responses to the behavioral environment subscale by job category in 2009-2010 were in the desired range.

Table2. Behavioral environment subscale ratings by item across job categories

Behavioral Environment	Administrators			Classified			Professional		
	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10
I have experienced discrimination while employed at AISD	1.65	1.68	2.13	1.87	1.82	2.03	1.66	1.86	2.08↑
Racial Tension	1.37	1.27	1.39	1.29	1.19	1.30	1.20	1.44↑	1.52
Bullying	1.26	1.25	1.49↑	1.32	1.33	1.43	1.20↓	1.27	1.56↑
Disrespect for supervisors	1.53	1.41	1.69↑	1.57	1.46	1.53	1.37↓	1.54↑	1.68
Disrespect for co-workers	1.68	1.56	1.78↑	1.67	1.66	1.76	1.44	1.64	1.63
Unsafe practices	1.19	1.13	1.75	1.38	1.29	1.35	1.20	1.24	1.33
Discrimination	-	-	1.37	-	-	1.36	-	-	1.55
Sexual Harassment	-	-	2.50	-	-	1.09	-	-	1.19

Note. Unlike the ratings in previous items and subscales, a low average response score (less than 2.0) is desirable for these items; thus, decrease from year to year are desirable. ↑ indicates a meaningful increase and ↓ indicates a meaningful decrease from the prior year.
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

Significant changes in item ratings are found when examining responses over time by job category. Administrators reported more bullying, and more disrespect for supervisors and co-workers in 2009-2010 than in prior years. Furthermore, professional staff reported more discrimination and bullying in 2009-2010 than in prior years.

Five additional items in the Central Office climate survey were found relevant to cultural competency. These items measure: respect for cultural diversity, respect of employees' opinions, open and honest communication within work groups, and knowledge of procedures to report sexual harassment and file a complaint.

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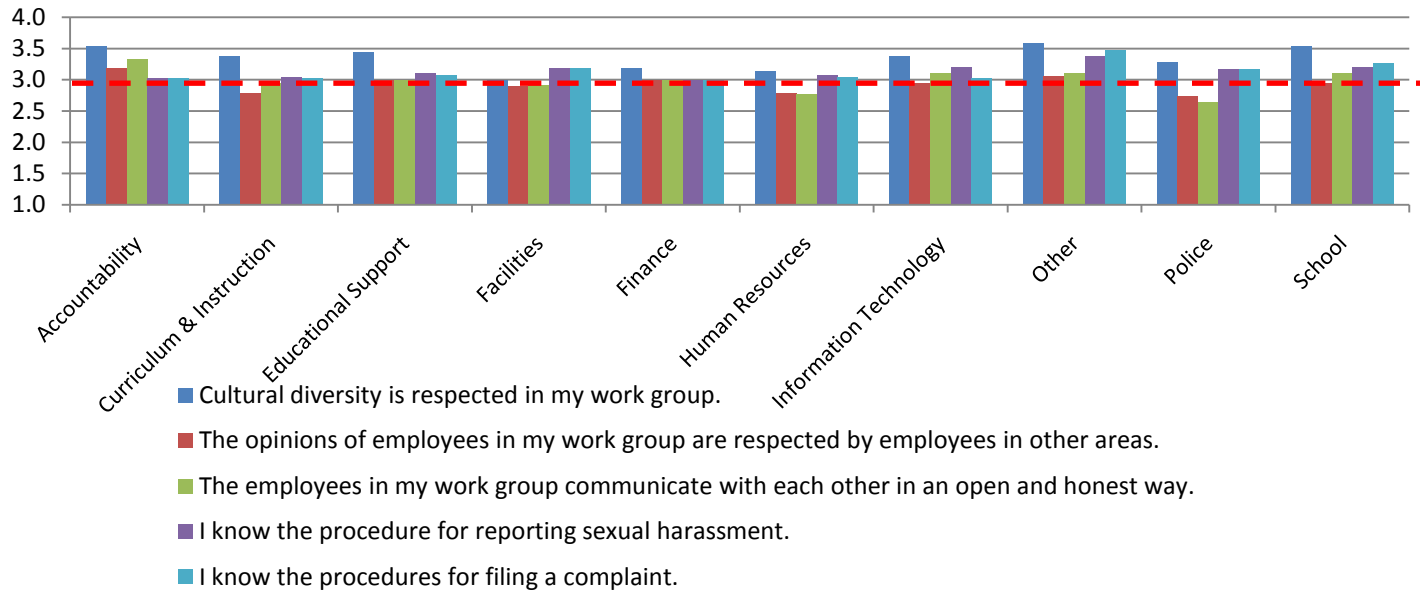
Figure 5. Cultural Competency items by department



Note. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). It is desirable to have an average score of 3.0 or higher; scores between 2.5 and 3.0 are "fair," and scores below 2.5 are "not positive."
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

Across departments, AISD staff rated these items positively; however, curriculum and instruction, facilities, human resources, and the police department rated items referring to work-group morale (i.e. the opinions of employees in my work group are respected by employees in other areas / the employees in my work group communicate with each other in an open and honest way) in the "fair" range.

Table 3. Staff ratings to items in the Employee Affiliation and Policies and Procedures subscales

	Administrators			Classified			Professional		
	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10
Cultural diversity is respected in my work group.	3.37	3.30	3.43	3.20	3.29	3.28	3.42↑	3.28	3.53[c]↑
The opinions of employees in my work group are respected by employees in other areas.	-	2.93	2.73	-	2.85	2.96	-	2.97	3.04
The employees in my work group communicate with each other in an open and honest way.	3.13	3.19	3.08	2.99	2.99	2.97	3.23	3.19	2.89↓
I know the procedure for reporting sexual harassment.	3.30	3.13	3.21[p]	3.04	3.00	3.13[p]	3.03	3.00	2.91
I know the procedures for filing a complaint.	3.22	3.12	3.24[cp]	2.92	2.92	3.06	2.85	2.82	2.90

Note. Items were rated on a scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 4 (Strongly Agree). It is desirable to have an average score of 3.0 or higher; scores between 2.5 and 3.0 are "fair," and scores below 2.5 are "not positive." ↑ indicates a meaningful increase and ↓ indicates a meaningful decrease from the prior year. [C] indicates a mean that is significantly higher than that for the Classified employee category; [P] indicates a mean that is significantly higher than that for the Professional employee category.
Source. 2009-2010 AISD Central Office climate survey

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Overall, all employee categories at Central Office rated these items in a "positive" range; however, ratings for respect of employees from other areas ranged in the "fair" category (except Professional staff in 09-10.) Professional staff ratings for respect of cultural diversity in 09-10 increased significantly from prior years; yet, ratings for open and honest communication within work groups decreased significantly from prior years.

Student Climate Survey

This survey is administered to all students in grades 3 through 11 and it is designed to measure their perceptions of six broad dimensions of climate. In 2009-2010, three-quarters of the district's students responded to the survey. Response rates were greatest at the elementary school level. Three items measuring students' perceptions of respect among classmates, teacher fairness, and cultural connection of curriculum with students' lives outside the classroom are particularly relevant to cultural competency.

Table 4. Student ratings to items in the Behavioral Environment, Adult Fairness, and Student Engagement subscales

	Elementary			Middle			High		
	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.	3.07	3.10	3.11	2.75	2.79	2.79	2.94	2.90	2.94
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.	3.59	3.58	3.58	2.97	3.05	3.04	2.83	2.92	2.99*
My teachers connect what I am doing to my life outside the classroom.	-	3.29	3.27	-	2.67	2.70	-	2.65	2.72

Note. An average of 3.0 or higher is considered desirable; statistically significant differences are denoted with *.
Source. 2009-2010 Student Climate survey

Elementary school ratings were positive for each question; however, middle and high school ratings were in the "fair" range. The lowest rating for these items was given by middle and high school students to the item regarding relevance of curriculum (i.e., my teachers connect what I am doing to my life outside the classroom). High school students' perceptions of adult fairness increased significantly from prior years.

Parent Survey

This survey provides campuses with feedback about how parents feel about their treatment by school staff, teachers' expectations for their child, the school's educational environment, and their own involvement in the school. In 2009-2010 a total of 20,770 parents responded to the survey, representing nearly 25% of the district's student population. Five items measuring the extent to which parents perceive a welcoming and respectful environment were found relevant to cultural competency.

Table 5. Parents ratings to items in the Respectful School Community subscale

	Elementary			Middle			High		
	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10	07-08	08-09	09-10
The school principal treats me with courtesy and respect.	3.51	3.50	3.50	3.30	3.35	3.31	3.14	3.34↑	3.41*
The school assistant principal(s) treat me with courtesy and respect.	3.47	3.48	3.48	3.25	3.34	3.30	3.13	3.27	3.36*
My child's teacher(s) treat me with courtesy and respect.	3.64	3.64	3.62	3.38	3.42	3.34	3.33	3.35	3.40
My child's counselor(s) treat me with courtesy and respect.	3.47	3.47	3.47	3.32	3.38	3.35	3.23	3.27	3.35
Office staff treat me with courtesy and respect.	3.46	3.50	3.47	3.26	3.34	3.33	3.20	3.28	3.32

Note. Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Source. 2009-2010 Parent survey

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Across all levels, AISD parents ratings were in the desirable range (i.e., 3.0 or higher). The highest ratings were given at the elementary school level; however, at the high school level ratings have increased consistently from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010. Furthermore, at the high school level, parents' perceptions of principal and assistant principal respect increased significantly from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010.

Next Steps

In general, AISD students, parents, and employees report adequate cultural competence in the district; however, the following areas require improvement:

- Middle school student bullying
- The police Department overall work environment
- Work morale (i.e., respect for employees' opinions in other areas / open and honest communication within work groups) in all departments and all job categories
- Discrimination and bullying among professional staff
- Bullying and disrespect for supervisors and co-workers among administrators
- Cultural connection of curriculum with students' lives outside the classroom (i.e., connection between curriculum and life outside the classroom)

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