# Whately Elementary School Executive Summary
# Comprehensive School Climate Inventory
# December 2015

Each survey question is linked to one dimension of school climate. For each dimension, each individual respondent is given a "scale score" based on an average of his or her responses to those particular items. To obtain a sense of the group's perception of a particular dimension, the median of all the individual scale scores was found. **The median is a midpoint- there are equal numbers of scores below and above the median.**

Scores **lower than 2.5 are negative**, scores **between 2.5-3.5 are neutral** and scores **above 3.5 are positive**. You'll see a difference in blue shading ranging from dark blue (negative) to light blue (positive) separating the difference in dimension scores.

## School Response Rates
- **NSCC Markers**: Students: 85%-100%, Staff: 85% and above, Parents: 30-40%
- Excellent student response rate – **99%** of all students completed the survey.
- Excellent staff response rate– **91%** of all staff members completed the survey.
- Excellent parent response rate– **73%** of all parents completed the survey.
- For further information about voices not represented in the survey, please refer to the demographic charts in the back of the report to determine which voices are and are not reflected in the report.

## Overall Profile
- There were several positive dimensions across student, staff, and parent populations. Staff felt tremendously positive across the board; all fifteen dimensions of school climate garnered positive ratings from staff.

- Students noted **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media** as areas for potential improvement at Whately Elementary School. These dimensions fell in the neutral range (2.5-3.5) which we describe as an area for improvement that necessitates "digging deeper."

- Parents also had a neutral perception of **Social Media**. Students' and parents' perceptions of this particular dimension converge given that both of their median ratings fell in the neutral range.

- Students, staff, and parents are very positive about **Social Support- Adults, Safety Rules and Norms, Respect for Diversity,** and **Physical Surroundings.** There is a

general consensus that a pattern of supportive and caring relationships between adults and students exists at Whately Elementary School. Adults in the building set high expectations for student success and show concern for students' well-being. Additionally, all three population groups agree that there are clearly communicated rules about physical violence, as well as a consistent enforcement and norms for adult intervention. The positive rating for **Physical Surroundings** indicates that Whately Elementary School upholds high standards for cleanliness, in addition to being orderly. Adequate materials, resources, and facilities are accessible to students and staff which contribute to positive school life.

- Students felt neutral about **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media**, whereas parents only felt neutral about **Social Media**. All of these dimensions had lower median ratings with respect to the other school climate dimensions.

- There is some variability in the way in which parents, students, and staff perceive **Sense of Physical Security.** Although this dimension was rated quite positively across all three population groups, there was a 0.50 difference in the median rating of this dimension between parents and staff (3.75 and 4.25 respectively). Additionally, there was a noticeable 0.25 difference in students' and parents' median rating for this dimension. **Sense of Physical Security** was the third lowest ranked dimension for parents, while it fell higher on the **Rank Order by Dimensions chart** for staff and students (please see **page 22** of the report). This variability is worth further exploring and it would be especially beneficial to hear parent voice/ feedback.

**Key Areas of Strength**

- **Safety Rules and Norms** was perceived tremendously positive across all three population groups. It was the highest ranked dimension for students, as well as the second highest ranked dimension for staff. There are clearly communicated rules about physical violence, verbal abuse, harassment, and teasing. Furthermore, there is a pattern of consistent enforcement and norms set in place for adult intervention.

- All three population groups perceived **Social Support- Adults** quite positively. This dimension garnered median ratings of 4.00 and above for students, staff, and parents. There is a consensus that students benefit from supportive and caring relationships with adults; they set high expectations for student success and are more than willing to get to know their students as individuals.

- **Respect for Diversity** was also perceived very positively across all three population groups. This school climate dimension gauges mutual respect for differences at all relational levels of the school (student-student, adult-student, and adult-adult). It was the second highest ranked dimension for students and the third highest ranked dimension for parents.
- **Physical Surroundings** garnered very high median ratings for students, staff, and parents which placed it in the positive range. All three population groups agree that Whately Elementary School is well-maintained, clean, and orderly. There is also a consensus that staff and students have adequate resources and materials available to them in the school building.
- Overall, all three population groups felt very positive about many of the school climate dimensions.

- **Digging deeper:**
  - Students across grades 3-6 had consistently high ratings for the following dimensions: **Safety Rules and Norms, Respect for Diversity, Social Support-Adults, Support for Learning,** and **Physical Surroundings.**
  - 4th, 5th, and 6th graders had a relatively high median rating for **Sense of Physical Security** (ranging from 4.00 to 4.38) which placed this dimension in the positive range.
  - **School Connectedness/ Engagement** was also tremendously positive across grades 3 through 6. This is a strong indication that students feel a positive identification with Whately Elementary School, as well as the school's norms for participation in school life.
  - Male and female students' median ratings of the school climate dimensions mirror each other greatly. This convergence in perception indicates that male and female students agree upon Whately's strengths and potential areas for improvement. Both males and females reported incredibly high ratings for **Safety Rules and Norms, Physical Surroundings,** and **Social Support- Adults.**
  - Female and male students were very positive about **Social Support- Students.** Both groups are benefiting from supportive and caring friendships with their peers.
  - Similarly, students who report that they do and do not participate in extracurricular activities demonstrate a consistent convergence in perception.

Many of the dimensions were perceived very positively across both sub-groups (for example, **Safety Rules and Norms, Support for Learning, Respect for Diversity,** and **Social Support- Adults** to name a few).

o Staff across all grade levels (K-6) were tremendously positive about all of the dimensions. There wasn't a single neutral or negative dimension present in the sub-group data for staff by grade level worked with. **Safety Rules and Norms, Physical Surroundings,** and **Social Support- Adults** emerged as dimensions with extremely high median ratings (this trend was also present in the student data).

o Teachers and paraprofessionals agreed, for the most part, on Whately Elementary School's strengths (with the exception of **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media** which were perceived neutrally among teachers). Both groups agree that there are clearly communicated rules, mutual respect for differences among all relational levels of the school, and that the physical surroundings are well-kept and up-to-date.

o Parents of students in grades K-6 had a positive perception of **Safety Rules and Norms,** as well as **Physical Surroundings.**

o Parents of students in first and second grade felt incredibly positive about all of the dimensions, with the exception of **Social Media** which fell in the neutral range.

o The dimensions that fall under the broader domains of **Institutional Environment** (which pertains to the brick and mortar aspects of school climate) and **Interpersonal Relationships** consistently fell in the positive range for parents of students. Please refer to the **13 Dimensions of School Climate Measured by the CSCI** on **page 5** of the report to see which dimensions fall under each of the broader categories and what their respective indicators are.

### Key Areas for Potential Improvement

- Two of the main areas for potential improvement are **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media.** Students may not feel safe from verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion. **Social Media** refers to the sense that students feel safe from physical harm, verbal abuse/teasing, gossip, and exclusion when online or on electronic devices. This dimension came up as a potential area for improvement for both students and parents alike. It was the only neutrally perceived dimension among the parent population.

- The two lowest ranked dimensions for students are **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media.** This indicates that students may feel subjected to verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion. Additionally, students may not feel safe from physical harm, teasing, exclusion, or verbal abuse while online or while using electronic devices. Both of these school climate dimensions fall under the **Safety** domain. Why might students feel especially vulnerable to exclusion, verbal abuse, and teasing? Are there certain locations or times during the day when students feel particularly vulnerable (spaces or times without enough adult supervision, for example)? How might students' perception of these two dimensions be further unpacked by considering their positive perception of **Safety Rules and Norms**? How can a bridge be built between **Safety Rules and Norms, Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media** so that the former's incredibly positive rating can be used to bring up the neutral perceptions of the latter two dimensions?

- Related to the aforementioned point, the two lowest ranked dimensions for staff and parents are also **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media.** These two dimensions frequently emerge as potential areas for improvement. It would be helpful to consider how other positively rated dimensions, such as **Social Support-Adults** can be used to unpack or mitigate these potential areas for improvement among the student population at Whately Elementary School.


- **Digging Deeper:**
  - **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** emerges as an area for potential improvement for 4th and 6th grade students. Students in 3rd and 5th grade had median ratings which fell in the positive range (3.58 and 3.67 respectively), whereas 4th and 6th graders' ratings fell in the neutral range (3.33 and 3.50 respectively). What might account for this variability in the student by grade sub-group data? Why might 4th and 6th graders feel more neutral about **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and consequently more vulnerable to teasing, exclusion, and verbal abuse? There is a revealing convergence in perception present in the parent by child's grade, as well as the student by grade sub-group data. Even though parents of students in K, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade all reported neutral perceptions of **Sense of Social-Emotional Security**, the parents of students in grades 4 and 6 had significantly lower median ratings for this dimension (3.25 for parents of students in 4th grade and 3.33 for parents of

students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade). What are some possible explanations for this convergence in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students' and parents' perceptions? How can action-planning be done in a way that is both strategic and sustainable in order to address this potential area for improvement?

o Third grade students were the only grade surveyed to report a median rating for **Sense of Physical Security** that fell in the neutral range (2.5 to 3.5). Their median rating was significantly lower (3.50 on a 5.0 scale) compared to their peers. At its highest, **Sense of Physical Security** garnered a median rating of 4.38 from 5<sup>th</sup> graders which places a significant difference of 0.88 between their median ratings. Parents of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders also pointed to this dimension as a potential area for improvement. In fact, parents of children in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade were the only group in the parent by child's grade sub-group data set to perceive **Sense of Physical Security** neutrally (with a median rating of 3.38 out of 5.0). Once again, parent and students' sub-group data by grade converges in interesting and meaningful ways to reveal what some members of the school community perceive as areas for improvement. It is worth exploring why 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, as well as their parents may feel that their children are more susceptible to physical harm in school.

o **Social Media** comes up as an area for potential improvement among 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. They might feel more vulnerable or susceptible to teasing, exclusion, and verbal abuse online or while using electronic devices as they become older and gain more access to technology.

o Male and female students reported neutral perceptions for both **Social Media** and **Sense of Social-Emotional Security.** In fact, their median ratings for these two dimensions mirrored each other. While there was a lack of variability in the student by gender sub-group data, male and female students are pointing to the same areas for potential improvement.

o Similarly, students who do and do not participate in extracurricular activities had neutral perceptions of **Social Media** and **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** (3.50 out of 5.00 across both sub-groups for these two dimensions).

o Teachers had a neutral perception of **Sense of Social-Emotional Security** and **Social Media**, whereas paraprofessionals had a positive perception. What might contribute to this divergence in perception? Why do teachers feel more wary

about verbal abuse, teasing, and exclusion among students online and in the school building?

- o Parents had consistently neutral perceptions of **Social Media** across grades K through 6. The median ratings ranged from 3.25 to 3.50 on the 5.0 Likert Scale.
- o Parents of students in kindergarten, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade had neutral perceptions of **Sense of Social-Emotional Security.**
- o Overall, **Support for Learning** had consistently positive ratings across all population groups, even within the sub-group data. However, parents of children in 5th grade had a neutral perception of **Support for Learning** with a median rating of 3.50. This dimension gauges the extent to which differentiated learning is honored in the classroom, as well as the usage of supportive teaching practices such as encouragement and constructive feedback.
- o There is some variability present in the parent sub-group data. Parents of students who have an IEP, as well as those who receive a reduced price meal plan, had lower median ratings than their counterparts for **Sense of Physical Security** and **Sense of Social-Emotional Security.**