



# School Climate Surveys

## River Edge School District

### Fall 2015

*Take Care of Yourself, Take Care of Each Other, Take Care of This Place*

# Overview



As we continue to develop programs that foster positive student development, this year we have a unifying theme of multicultural awareness and appreciation. Our goal is to prepare students to live and work in a global, multicultural society by creating and supporting a teaching-learning environment where all employees and students understand and value commonalities and differences within and across various cultures in order to produce a harmonious community of lifelong learners. Our plan includes curriculum development across all areas to produce positive outcomes academically, emotionally, and socially.

To help us towards this goal, we requested input from students, staff, and parents from surveys of ten questions each with room for an open comment created in Google Docs. Responses were on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being never and 5 being always. The survey was sent via email with a link in October and open for one month. All groups received two reminders/requests for completion.

## Parent Survey Summary

- 305 Parents/Guardians replied to the survey
- Responses to the ten questions reflected a very positive view and experience
- Parents/Guardians wrote in 48 additional comments
- The comments were by and large favorable regarding the general school climate
- Efforts to respond to bullying by teachers was noted
- Parents took this opportunity to note their appreciation for caring teachers who respond quickly to concerns about their children
- Appreciation for Mr. Henzel was shared

### Concerns included:

- Need for more diversity in the display of cultural materials
- Sensitivity to all cultures and holidays was requested
- Increasing need for Social Media/Digital Dangers lessons

## Student Survey Summary

- 597 students in Grades 3-6 responded
- The responses to the ten questions reflected a very strong feeling of safety and support from the teachers and staff
- Students wrote in 145 additional comments
- The comments were by and large positive regarding how students felt at school
- Many students shared that they felt safe and were treated fairly and with kindness
- Many students took this opportunity to thank individual teachers

### Concerns included:

- Girls not being nice
- Feeling excluded
- Bullying that might be happening but not seen

## Staff Survey Summary

- 46 Staff members responded to the survey
- Responses to questions about teaching and fair treatment of students were very high
- Responses to having materials to use and display reflected a need for more support
- 8 additional comments requested new resources for general and specific curricular units to enhance multicultural lessons
- Reference was made to our growing diversity and looking forward to learning experiences that enhance students' tolerance and helping the school community become more cohesive

## Lessons and Activities

Students have participated in a variety of activities across all subject areas to celebrate River Edge's diverse community. The River Edge Education Foundation purchased grade level multicultural books for each school. The students and staff thoroughly enjoyed these literary pieces and were energized by the stories of children from around the world. Students were able to empathize with the characters and expressed great appreciation for what they have here in River Edge.

Well beyond the initial reading and discussion of the stories, teachers used the texts to:

- Connect to additional books on the topics
- Write alternate endings to the story
- Compare a day in the life of a child in Vietnam with theirs
- Explore the history and geography of Asia and Africa
- Learn about providing water for distant villages

Some of the activities that are planned throughout the year:

- Continue to learn about places around the world in non-fiction units of study for Reading and Writing Workshop
- Compare life timelines across cultures
- Learn about immigrants to the United States at different periods in our history
- Connect with students in schools around the world

Our PACs continue to provide small group, classroom, grade level, and school wide programs to help our students develop social skills and strategies to make good choices in their actions and reactions. The areas of concern shared in the comments are being addressed as follows:

Need for more diversity in the display of cultural materials	Bulletin Boards reflect diversity of names, languages, traditions of River Edge families. Teachers will continue to expand this in their lessons and display of student work
Sensitivity to all cultures and holidays was requested	Sharing different customs and holiday traditions; learning songs and special foods for different cultures Passports to Peace reflecting student culture Morning Greeting in different languages
Increasing need for Social Media/Digital Dangers lessons	Digital Citizenship lessons in grades Three to Six with Teachers, Tech Coaches, and PACs
Girls not being nice	Girls Empowered in Fourth Grade Social Skills lessons and groups in Grade Two
Feeling excluded	Zippy in Kindergarten Big Buddies for Grade One Social Clubs at Lunch/Recess Grades 2-5 Generation Text Online in Grades Three and Four
Bullying that might be happening but not seen	Students Standing Strong - Student Anti-Bullying Awareness Group Grades Four-Six NJ Child Assault Protection lessons for students in Grades K-2 Conflict Resolution Lessons - Grade Two

# Moving Forward

- Share activities and student work on R.E.A.C.H., Facebook, Twitter, and websites
- Celebrate International Day as part of greater Multicultural Curriculum
- Assemblies to support Multicultural theme
- PTO Scholastic Fair revenue used in part to purchase additional books
- Dime Drive to raise \$\$ for fresh water in South Sudan
- Curriculum Mapping of multicultural topics to align units of study across the curriculum
- Presentation from Prosecutor's Office for Parents and Students (with babysitting for younger siblings)
- Translation of Key Documents/Communications - which languages?

Suggestions and Ideas???

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