1. **Data Driven: Assessment and Action Planning**
   - Conduct school-wide needs and resource assessments.
   - Examine how structures, processes, systems must be changed to reduce resistance to change.
   - Assess skills, perceptions, and needs of students, staff, and parents (Cal-SCHLS).
   - Use data as roadmap to guide action planning and decision-making in which evidence-based programs and strategies are implemented that address identified needs.
   - Monitor progress.

2. **School wide Commitment to Common Culture**
   - Changing culture requires commitment from all stakeholders and lots of hard work.
   - Begin with addressing the belief system.
   - Foster common norms, expectations, and beliefs focused around school climate principles.
   - Efforts need to be school wide and integrated into school improvement.
   - If all staff aren’t “on board,” the process is undermined.
   - School climate promotion strategies need to become habits of mind, the way to do business daily.
   - Once done, provide stability and sustainability when staff and administrators change.

3. **Principal Leadership**
   - Ensure change can happen.
   - Hold staff accountable for fostering and modeling positive behavior and conditions.
   - Develop and articulate a shared vision.
   - Train teachers and staff to implement effective strategies and programs through professional development.
   - Build learning environments that are healthy and engaging.
   - Improve classroom management practices.

4. **Stakeholder Involvement**
   - Promotes caring, fosters meaningful participation, ownership, and buy-in.
   - Benefits action planning and decision-making.
   - Benefits data (higher survey participation).
   - Benefits meaningful student participation in school planning, rules, and decisions.

   Also…
   - Involve all school stakeholders in the process—students, staff, and parents.
   - Ask students what will improve the school (S3 Student Listening Circle).

For more school climate resources, check out the S3 website at [http://californias3.wested.org](http://californias3.wested.org)
Ten Essential Elements for Improving School Climate

5. Address Staff Climate & Culture
   - Creating positive learning conditions for students begins with positive working conditions for staff.
   - If staff morale is low, staff don’t feel supported by and connected to school, turnover is high, and quality instruction can’t be provided.
   - Climate factors (relationships/ collegiality, expectations, participation/decision-making) are among the most important in whether teachers stay or leave.

6. Prioritize Needs
   - Begin by using data to identify a few key problems that will make the most difference if fixed.
   - Many school climate strategies are low cost, can be quickly and easily implemented, and can result in early visible improvements.
   - Demonstrate change is possible.
   - Work collaboratively to create change.
   - Rally staff around school improvement efforts; overcome resistance and inertia.
   - If the tone and conditions are set, long-term improvements are more likely.

7. Relationships and Rigor are Key!
   - Relationships are the keystone for all other aspects of classroom management (Marzano & Marzano 2003).
   - The most important factor in school climate is school connectedness (McNeely 2005).
   - Most effective when informal, not formalized as in special Advisory classes (McClure et al. 2008).
   - Protective factors don’t totally eliminate risk factors.
   - Most effective outcomes occur when relationships are combined with academic rigor and high expectations.
   - Student perceptions of adult caring and high expectations are linked.
Ten Essential Elements for Improving School Climate

8. Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS): The IOM/Public Health/PBIS Model
- Implement a multi-tiered system of supports that provide universal supports for all students.
- Build a process for identifying high-risk groups and individuals that need special attention and intervention efforts.
- Implement a systematic 3-tiered pyramidal approach that provides:
  - Universal supports for all students, including the three developmental factors.
  - Targeted interventions and referrals for services for high-risk youth, working in collaboration with community agencies.

9. District Support
- Essential to long-term, sustainable success, including ensuring continuity when school staff change.
- Communicates the importance of a positive school climate through district policies, standards, and guidelines.
- Organizationally embed school climate in the school improvement office — Don’t marginalize.
- Provide financial support (budget priority).
- Require or encourage data collection and monitoring.
- Provide professional development.
- Incentivize or reward schools with positive climates (e.g., certificates or recognition program).

10. Implement Single School Culture

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