



School Climate and Student Learning: Thinking Outside the Box

Tuesday, May 7
3:30 – 4:30 pm

School Climate and Student Learning: Thinking Outside the Box

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Today's Agenda

- The link between youth well-being and learning
- Reconceptualizing “school environment”
 - Relationship to youth well-being outcomes
- Example: outdoor play, green space exposure, and improved mental health
- Concluding thoughts

Youth Well-Being and Learning

- Youth well-being and learning (in particular, being motivated and ready to learn) are inextricably linked.



A few examples

- “Educationally relevant health disparities”:
 - Access to wholesome breakfast and lunch;
 - Comprehensive vision, hearing, and oral health screenings;
 - **Access to and daily opportunities for physical activity;**
 - **Classroom and/or school-wide efforts that promote a safe, supportive, and thriving**



Can a school's environment help address these disparities by shaping a student's ability to learn effectively and also improving their quality of health?

How do K-12 schools in NYC currently operationalize “environment”?

Sustainability Goals

- Waste Management/Recycling
- Energy Conservation
- Water Consumption
- Ecology
- Green Curriculum

Facilities/Structural Issues

- Heat/Air Conditioning
- Ventilation
- Type and quality of paint used
- School’s proximity to green spaces
- Solar panels
- Outdoor air quality in the school’s surrounding neighborhood.

School Environment

- While the physical environment of a school and its classrooms are so important, there are other elements of school climate (which acknowledge the social and emotional aspects of learning and child development) that must also be integrated into conversations and efforts on a school's physical environment.
- Indeed, a significant and growing body of research has confirmed the relationship between a positive school climate and improved mental and emotional well-being among youth, reduced rates of engagement in various risk behaviors, and improved academic outcomes.

Galanti, et al., 2016

Townsend, et al., 2017

Rajan, Namdar, & Ruggles,

2015

Positive School Climate Indicators

- Positive student-teacher relationships;
- Students who feel safe at school, not only in their classrooms but also in non-classroom areas (cafeteria, hallways, playgrounds, and on their way to and from school);
- Teachers who are supported via the provision of adequate materials and resources, in-classroom teaching assistance, and regular professional development, in addition to a safe physical classroom environment;
- Access to green spaces on and off-campus



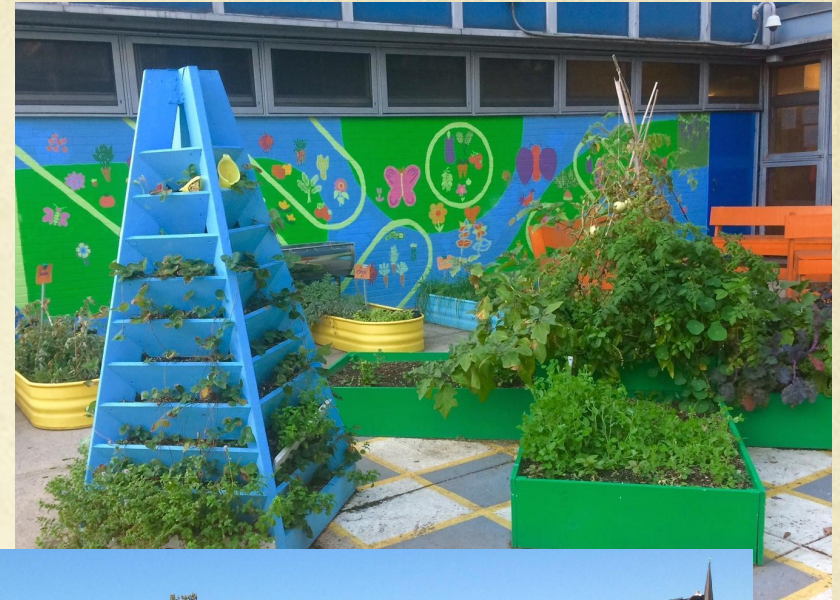
What do we mean by “school climate”?

“[School climate refers to the] norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe.” (National School Climate Council, 2007)

This can be – and often is – reflected in a school’s physical space as well.







Boerum Hill PS 261
Community Playground
Brooklyn, New York
Photos: Joan Keener

666 Broadway, Ninth Floor
New York, NY 10012
(212) 677-7171/ph



After

How do these efforts improve the well-being of our students?

Sustainability Goals

- Waste Management/Recycling
- Energy Conservation
- Water Consumption
- **Ecology**
- Green Curriculum

Facilities/Structural Issues

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Green Space, Outdoor Play, and Mental Health

- Research confirms there is a significant association between proximity to green spaces and improved mental well-being of children.
- Outdoor play and green environments can impact mental health **and** improve school climate.



Imagine a learning environment that is...

- Playful
 - Filled with opportunities for play, experimenting with ideas, materials, norms, relationships, practices
- Positive
 - Shared vision of respect and engagement; Emphasis is placed on collective sense of safety and care.
- Sustainable
 - Increases access to green spaces on and off-campus (school gardens; participation in school programming efforts that take place in a neighboring park; outdoor education opportunities; views of greenery from a classroom window)
- Health Promoting
 - Promotes outdoor play; advocates for more recess time; takes advantage of green spaces to facilitate new teaching opportunities

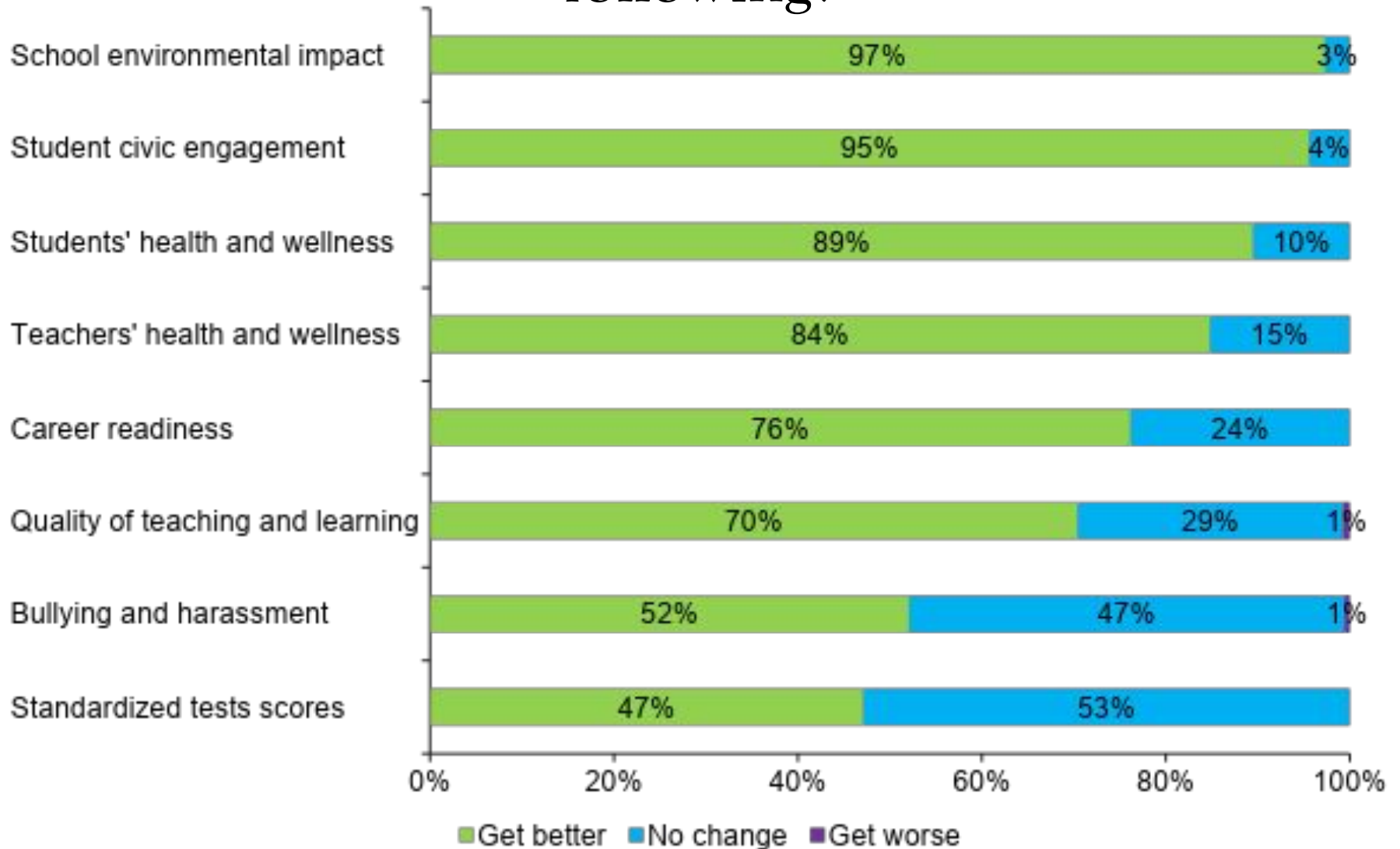
Questions/Thoughts?

- Sonali Rajan (sr2345@tc.columbia.edu)

opinions about the impact of sustainability efforts on schools. We are interested in your perspective.

To what extent do you think that sustainability efforts affect each of the following?

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To what extent do you think that sustainability efforts affect each of the following?

- The perceived impact of school sustainability effort is not associated with the Coordinator's position (e.g., teachers, Assistant Principals, and others), years as Sustainability Coordinator, and years at school.



VITO MARCANTONIO PEACE GARDEN

Paul Clarke

CPE₂

**To thrive
we must survive.**

Shakira Provasoli

PS 333



The image features a deep blue background with a view of Earth from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the atmosphere. At the bottom, there is a white silhouette of a city skyline with various skyscrapers. The word "Questions?" is written in a white, serif font in the center of the image.

Questions?

The background of the slide is a blue-tinted image of Earth as seen from space, showing the curvature of the planet and the atmosphere. At the bottom of the image, there is a white silhouette of a city skyline, likely representing New York City, with several prominent skyscrapers.

THANK YOU

Please visit
www.tc.columbia.edu/sustainability