



Understanding School Culture

Strand: Culture and Climate

Workshop Overview

Following is a general overview of this workshop, including desired participant outcomes, an explanation of the workshop’s alignment with Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, and resources that are included in print and electronic form.

Category: Teacher Essentials

Duration: Full workshop – 3 hours

Desired Outcomes:

Participants will...

- Recognize key elements of school culture.
- Investigate how history, symbols, and traditions bind people together.
- Recognize harmful patterns that keep a culture from growing.
- Assess their current work culture.

Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

- **Learning Communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- **Resources:** Requires prioritizing, monitoring, and coordinating resources for educator learning.
- **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.
- **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards.

Resources in This Binder:

- Attendee Handouts:
 - Workshop Agenda
 - Pre-reading Assignment: “School Culture: The Hidden Curriculum” by Craig Jerald
 - Handout 1: Scavenger Hunt
 - Handout 2: School Culture Survey
 - Attendee Notes
 - 3-2-1 Evaluation Form
 - Certificate of Completion
- School Culture Survey Tally Sheet
- “Think About It” Exercise
- Ready, Set, Go Planning Activity



References

- Bower, M. (1966). *The will to manage*. Columbus, OH: McGraw-Hill.
- Deal, T. & Kennedy, A. (1982). *Corporate cultures*. Indianapolis, IN: Addison-Wesley.
- Jerald, C. (2006, December). Issue brief. School culture: The hidden curriculum. Washington, DC: Center for Comprehensive School Reform. Retrieved from www.centerforcsri.org
- Marion, R. (2002). *Leadership in education*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.
- Peterson, K. & Deal, T. (1999). *Shaping school culture*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Topic Outline

Understanding the general flow of topics to be covered is an important part of giving a strong presentation. This allows the presenter(s) to lead effective group discussions and speak extemporaneously.



Following are the primary and secondary topics covered in this PowerPoint presentation. As you prepare to give the workshop, you may want to refer to this page often.

Main Topics:

1. High Notes of School Culture
2. What Makes Culture Thrive?
3. The Carbon Footprint of a Workplace
4. Moving Our Culture Forward

Subtopics:

- 1. High Notes of School Culture**
 - a. Defining school culture
 - b. Why culture matters
 - c. Movers and shakers
- 2. What Makes Culture Thrive?**
 - a. Five signs of a thriving culture
 - b. History
 - c. Symbols
 - d. Rituals
- 3. The Carbon Footprint of a Workplace**
 - a. Warning signs
 - b. Carbon calculator
 - c. Go green
- 4. Moving Our Culture Forward**
 - a. Three points of leverage
 - b. Read it (Scavenger Hunt activity)
 - c. Measure it (School Culture Survey activity)
 - d. Celebrate it (Closing Act activity)

Presentation Outline



This outline is designed for you to see the PowerPoint presentation at a glance. Note that slide numbers and the approximate amount of time needed per slide are shown in the right two columns. **The times in bold print show the approximate total time needed for that topic, while non-bold print times show the approximate amount of time an activity will take within that topic.** You might consider keeping this page within reach during the presentation.

Section of Presentation	Slide #	Timing (mins)
Getting Started		
Introduce self, co-teacher, participants Essential questions and objectives	1-5	20
Activity – Checking In	4-5	(10)
Topic 1 – High Notes of School Culture		
Activity – Remember When	11	(10)
Topic 2 – What Makes Culture Thrive?		
Activity – Singing Bee	21	(20)
Break (10 minutes)		
Topic 3 – The Carbon Footprint of a Workplace		
Activity – Walk About	26	(15)
Topic 4 – Moving Our Culture Forward		
Activity – Scavenger Hunt	29-30	(45)
Activity – School Culture Survey	31	(10)
Activity – Closing Act	32	(10)
Total of 3 hours (including break)		

Helpful Tip! This workshop can be broken up into two 1½ hour segments to allow you to adapt the presentation according to your time constraints. Just use the break as a guide for dividing the workshop into two parts; the second half will be a bit longer than the first half.



“Think About It” Exercise



Have staff complete this exercise to begin implementing what they learned during the workshop. Distribute this document to staff by attaching the file to the Next Day Follow-Up Email, or make copies for the staff.

1. What cultural elements make our learning environment strong?

2. What “harmful emissions” might need a bit of cleaning up?

3. What other ways can we celebrate our successes?
