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SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE: THE OTHER DIMENSION

Assessment of school quality is frequently made in terms such as test score trends, enrollment growth, and graduation percentages. These results are typically attributed to factors like adequate funding, teacher training, or average class size. However, these pieces of the school puzzle do not represent the entire picture.

The most important resource the school has for dealing with these vital issues is the level of performance of all people connected with the school (administrators, teachers, parents, and students). The effort and productivity of this school community requires a high level of morale which is strongly linked to what is known as the school's "Climate".

CLIMATE

School Climate can be described as the "atmosphere" or "tone" sensed by someone in a school setting. It may be called something like "ambiance", "mood", or "vibe". We use such words as "friendly", "happy", "inviting", "tense", "hostile", or "depressing" to explain it.

The Climate can be more rigorously defined as the aggregate emotional and psychological response of a group of people to some set of characteristics of the school environment. How the participants perceive the climate will determine their attitude toward the school.

The list of items that can constitute climate is lengthy and varied. Any number of things from the intellectual depth of the curriculum to the color of paint on the walls can elicit positive, negative, or neutral feelings. Given this bewildering array of possible components of climate, how can we recognize which ones can be utilized to modify perception of the climate?

A good place to start is with some fairly well-known areas of school life whose presence or absence on the scene evokes strong feelings from students, staff, and visitors. Here are just a few obvious examples:

- o Stimulating, orderly, and engaging classroom experience
- o Availability and quality of individual instruction
- o High expectation for excellent performance at all levels
- o Clear opportunity for advancement, growth, and recognition by all involved
- o Fair and respectful treatment of students, teachers, and staff.
- o Challenging and relevant curriculum

While this short list is by no means complete, it is intended to exemplify the type of important, but difficult to quantify issues that affect the group spirit. And don't forget that the seemingly small and simple things such as decoration of hallways (or lack of it), telephone courtesy, drinking fountains that work, or fresh flowers at the reception desk also contribute to climate. No single one of them makes a huge difference, but taken all together, they can create lasting impressions.

The point is to be mindful of climatic consequences when generating policies and procedures. Once a climate-improving outcome is identified, it is in most cases easy and cheap to apply. It's the thought that counts. This is especially true of the small items. The trick is to recognize them.

CULTURE

Any discussion of school climate must necessarily include a consideration of the school's culture. The culture of an organization is comprised of a set of beliefs, priorities, practices, expectations, and behaviors that has developed and evolved over time. It is the product of the collective values, goals, and experiences of all the people participating in it.

Because the culture affects so many segments of school life that impinge on the school's climate, the climate tends to act as a short term manifestation of the school culture, ultimately representing the values and priorities of that culture. A positive and healthy culture will produce a positive and healthy climate. A weak, misdirected, or undernourished culture will invariably produce a negative and unpleasant climate.

In the next issue of Newsflash we will explore how schools can optimize the effects of school Climate by the application of Intentional Culture. We will see how the proactive management of the school's culture can be utilized to control the quality of the school environment as a whole, which will include the school Climate.

NEW CHARTER STARTERS SERVICES

Renaissance Program

What's right, wrong and What to do about it...Right Now!

This is a 2 day on-site comprehensive program to assess and revitalize your school.

Working hand in hand with your administration, board, staff and parents to produce a thorough evaluation of your school and put together a program to bring stability and understanding to your staff administration and parents.

Fee: \$3,000

Board and Administration Development Retreat

This 1 day on-site workshop is dedicated to help your board and administration revitalize your school's organizational development through exercises, discussion, and interviews to uncover problematic areas and utilize this information to plan for improvement. Each of our board workshops is individually tailored to the client's particular situation and needs.

Fee: \$1,300

Getting out from under PERS

Mark Hazelton, Executive Director of the Kings Valley Charter School and Charter Starters partner, has overseen his school's switch to a new retirement plan that eliminates PERS and gives more retirement funding to his staff. The school is now in its second year of successful implementation of this plan.

Unfortunately, we have not yet been able to put together a class on this topic. However...

We will be glad to answer any questions about this topic if you will send your queries to charterstarters@gmail.com

Assessments

Charter Starters offers several assessment services:

Whole School Assessment and Report

It is not too early to think about year end assessments. Clients have used our independent third party school assessments as part of their annual reports as well as a basis for school improvement plans. This one day on-site assessment uses the **Charter Starters On Track!®** Charter School Governance and Accountability Assessment Tool. This is the same assessment that was done by Charter Starters for Oregon's state-sponsored schools. Report includes findings and suggestions for remediation.

Fee: \$1500

Date: On your schedule

Administration Assessment and Report

This one day on-site assessment checks for efficiencies, legal responsibilities, adherence to job description and polls all staff member for a complete look at the Administrations competence and staff readiness. Our thorough checks for compliance with policies, procedures, legal requirements and personnel issues help insure a smoother-running day to day operation. Report includes findings and suggestions for remediation.

Fee: \$1500

Date: On your schedule

Teaching Staff Assessment and Report

A school is only as good as the teachers it hires. This assessment takes place in each classroom and includes interviews with all teaching staff and the school administrator or director. Report includes findings and suggestions for remediation.

Fee: \$1500

Date: On your schedule

OREGON CHARTER SCHOOLS IN THE NEWS

We provide recent newspaper articles and messages from around the state and from various national charter school organizations. Some links are time sensitive and will drop from the host website after a few days.

Charter school advocates rank Oregon 26th

http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2013/01/charter_school_advocates_rank.html

Charters' Path to Success or Failure Set Early, Study Finds

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/charterschoice/2013/01/charters_odds_of_success_or_failure_show_early_on_study_finds.html

Center for Ed. Reform Takes Aim at CREDO Study

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/charterschoice/2013/02/center_for_ed_reform_takes_aim_at_credos_study.html

Charter Schools' Discipline Policies Face Scrutiny

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/02/20/21charters_ep.h32.html?tkn=QSRFe6ETgAmVWzvNsTnh3bzwYhjY%2F6LAbJbL&cmp=clp-edweek

Essential Steps for Charter School Authorizing Outlined

http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/charterschoice/2013/03/nasca_outlines_essential_steps_to_charter_school_authorizing.html

Supporters of Kids Unlimited's charter school proposal pack house at hearing

<http://www.mailtribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130313/NEWS/303130324>

Private school enrollment falling in Oregon, charter schools may be the cause

http://www.oregonlive.com/education/index.ssf/2013/03/private_school_enrollment_fall.html

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Corporate & Miscellaneous Grant Opportunities

Title: *Nike Employee Grant Fund*

The Nike Employee Grant Fund was established at The Oregon Community Foundation in 2010. Through this fund, Nike employees will work with OCF to award \$500,000 per year to local nonprofits.

This is Nike's "backyard" program, engaging employees in aiding nonprofits in communities where local Nike employees live – Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington and Yamhill counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington. Grants will be one-year awards, generally between \$5,000 and \$20,000.

Most grants will be awarded through the lens of sport, for projects that use sport or physical activity to leverage other community benefits, but some grants will be awarded for projects that address broader family and children's issues.

Eligibility: nonprofits in Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah, Washington, and Yamhill counties in Oregon, and Clark County in Washington.

Award: between \$5,000 and \$20,000.

Deadline: June 1, 2013. (twice yearly, June 1 and December 1).

Information: <http://www.oregoncf.org/grants-scholarships/grants/ocf-funds/nike>

Program guidelines(.pdf): http://www.oregoncf.org/Templates/media/files/grants/nike_grant_guidelines.pdf

Title: *Touching Lives Through Theatre Grants 2013-2014*

Source: Pioneer Drama Service

Pioneer Drama Service is proud to offer Touching Lives Through Theatre™ Grants available for the upcoming 2013-14 school year. Because we believe so strongly in the power of theatre to make a difference in a student's life, we are awarding a total of \$5000 of grants in the form of Pioneer Drama credit to qualifying middle and high schools.

Our goal with these grants is to create and support school theatre programs, generating positive opportunities for students and giving them a place to shine. Theatre allows children to involve themselves in an experience that brings growth, maturity, teamwork and responsibility—qualities that are relevant to all aspects of life. A 2010 applicant summed this up quite eloquently:

"The theatre program at my school is one of the most important and beneficial aspects of the school... Students enter the stage apprehensive and shy and leave the stage with confidence, poise and grace. Whether students are destined for Broadway or the corporate world, no doubt about it, theatre has a positive influence on their lives."

Each grant is intended to help create a complete drama experience for students in a school and must be used to stage at least one theatrical production. Grants will range from \$100 to \$500 of credit at Pioneer Drama Service, which is to be used for production materials, royalty fees, texts, DVDs and makeup. Grant funds will be awarded by August 15, 2013 and must be spent in their entirety by June 15, 2014

Eligibility: accredited public or private schools that have a designated faculty member who sponsors their theatre program. Theatre programs must have a budget of \$500 or less annually. Schools with no prior drama program are also eligible.

Award: \$100-500 credit at Pioneer Drama Service.

Deadline: Applications accepted April 1-June 30, 2013.

Information: <http://www.touchinglivesthroughtheatregrants.com/>

Title: *From Failure to Promise K-12 Educator's Grant for 2013*

Source: Dr. Cleamon Moorer

In "From Failure to Promise," author Dr. Cleamon Moorer describes his experiences, from flunking out of college to becoming an engineer, consultant, and a university professor. He is now awarding \$1,000 to a community-based organization, library, or school that uses the tenets of his book to motivate, energize, and catapult K-12 students to reach their full potential in literacy, math, science, or technology.

Please note: Teachers are not required to purchase a book. In most circumstances, a review copy will be provided upon request.

Eligibility: K-12 educators and leaders of youth groups are encouraged to apply.

Award: \$1000.

Deadline: July 31, 2013.

Information: <http://www.fromfailuretopromise.com/K-12--Educator-s-Literacy-Grant.html>

Foundation Grant Opportunities

Title: *Toshiba America Foundation Science and Math Grants*

The Toshiba America Foundation (TAF) gives up to and over \$5,000 to math and science teachers in public and private schools. Funds will be given to teachers who engage students in positive and challenging learning experiences. Past successful grantees used the students' natural curiosity and enabled them to frame their own scientific questions.

Toshiba America Foundation grants fund the projects ideas and materials teachers need to innovate in their math and science classrooms. TAF is interested in funding projects designed by teachers or small teams of teachers for use in their own schools.

Two types of grants are awarded: middle and high school application (Grades 6-12), and elementary school (Grades K-5).

Eligibility: public and nonprofit private schools throughout the United States.

General Information: <http://www.toshiba.com/taf/about.jsp>

For grades 6-12

Award: rolling , up to \$5000, twice yearly, over \$5000

Deadline: over \$5000 twice yearly, February 1 and August 1.

Information: <http://www.toshiba.com/taf/612.jsp>

Application: http://www.toshiba.com/taf/612_apply.jsp

For grades K-5

Award: up to \$1000

Deadline: once a year on October 1

Information: <http://www.toshiba.com/taf/k5.jsp>

Application: http://www.toshiba.com/taf/k5_apply.jsp

Title: *Captain Planet Foundation Grants*

The Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) annually funds projects involving children and young adults that promote understanding of environmental issues. These projects must include children and young adults aged 6-18 and focus on hands-on involvement, interaction and cooperation within the group, development of planning and problem solving skills, and adult supervision.

Eligibility: Schools and nonprofit organizations.

Award: \$250-2500.

Deadline: September 30, 2013. (Twice yearly, February 28, September 30).

Information: <http://captainplanetfoundation.org/apply-for-grants/>

Title: *American Honda Foundation Youth and Scientific Education Grants*

The American Honda Foundation makes grants to nonprofits, programs, and organizations that directly benefit STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) youth education.

Eligibility: K-12 educational institutions, non-profit organizations, gifted student programs, media concerning youth education, youth education projects, programs pertaining to academic or curriculum development that emphasize innovative educational methods and techniques, and more.

Award: \$20000-60000.

Deadline: August 1, 2013 (Four times yearly, February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1).

Grant Information: <http://corporate.honda.com/america/philanthropy.aspx?id=ahf>

Detailed Application Brochure (pdf):

http://corporate.honda.com/images/banners/america/AHF_brochure.pdf

Online Application:

http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/quiz.display_question?x_gm_id=2587&x_quiz_id=1338&x_order_by=1

Title: *Living In a Material World Grants*

Source: ASM International Foundation

To help teachers bring materials science into their classrooms, the ASM International Foundation is awarding 10 grants of \$500 each to K-12 teachers. The purpose of these grants is to enhance awareness of materials science and the role of materials scientists in society.

The application procedure requires a 2-page proposal describing a curriculum-based hands-on project that involves student observation, communication, mathematics, and science skills while enhancing their awareness of the materials around them. A 1-page summary report will be required of winning proposals.

The purpose of these grants is to enhance awareness of materials science and the role of materials scientists in society. With a network of local Chapters across North America, ASM members are willing to work closely with local teachers to develop and implement these lessons.

Eligibility: K-12 teachers.

Award: \$500.

Deadline: May 25, 2013.

Information:

<http://www.asminternational.org/portal/site/www/foundation/educators/k-12-grants/>

Title: *Student Achievement Grants*

Source: National Education Association (NEA) Foundation.

The NEA Foundation provides grants to improve the academic achievement of students in U.S. public schools and public higher education institutions in any subject area(s). The proposed work should engage students in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen their knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection.

Eligibility: Public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education.

Award: \$2000 and \$5,000.

Deadline: June 1, 2013 (Three times yearly, February 1, June 1, October 15).

Information: <http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/nea-student-achievement-grants/>

Title: *Learning and Leadership Grant*

Source: National Education Association (NEA) Foundation.

The NEA Foundation provides grants to support public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education for one of the following two purposes: Grants to individuals fund participation in high-quality professional development experiences, such as summer institutes or action research; or

grants to groups fund collegial study, including study groups, action research, lesson study, or mentoring experiences for faculty or staff new to an assignment.

Eligibility: Public school teachers, public education support professionals, and/or faculty and staff in public institutions of higher education.

Award: \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study. All \$5,000 group grant applicants must include partner information.

Deadlines: June 1, 2013. (three times yearly, February 1, June 1, October 15).

Information: <http://www.neafoundation.org/pages/learning-leadership-grants/>

Title: *Music Education Grants*

Source: Mockingbird Foundation, Inc.

The Mockingbird Foundation offers grants to schools and nonprofit organizations that effect improvements in areas of importance to the Phish fan community. Mockingbird is interested in projects that foster self-esteem and free expression, and particularly (though not exclusively) interested in programs which benefit disenfranchised groups, including those with low skill levels, income, or education. Grants range from \$100 to \$5,000 and are made on a one-time basis.

Eligibility: 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and public schools. School-based grantees cannot be independent of the school, must take place at the school, and must be supervised by the applicable municipality.

Award: \$100 to \$5,000.

Deadline: Submission of initial inquiries occurs via an online form which opens by January and is due by August 1, 2013.

General Information: <http://mbird.org/funding/guidelines/>

Application Information: <http://mbird.org/funding/inquiries/>

Title: *National Educators Grants*

Source: P. Buckley Moss Foundation

The P. Buckley Moss Foundation for Children's Education has grants available to be awarded in 2013 to educators who need assistance to further their 2014 program goals.

Applications may be made for a grant for a project within schools serving all children (including students who learn differently) pre-K – 12, that integrates the arts into educational programs. The purpose for this grant is to aid and support teachers who wish to establish or maintain an effective learning tool using the visual arts within the school day.

Eligibility: Schools pre-K through 12.

Award: Up to \$1,000.

Deadline: September 30, 2013

General Information: <http://www.mossfoundation.org/national-educators-grants-0>

Application Information:

<http://www.mossfoundation.org/sites/mossfoundation.garzawebdesign.com/files/images/Educator%20Grant%20Application%202013.doc>

Title: *Literacy and Education Grants*

Source: Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation

The mission of the Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation is to make life more bearable for children, families and pets in need of the kindness of others. The Build-A-Bear Workshop Bear Hugs Foundation will make grants to qualified non-profit organizations that support the health and wellness of children and families, the care and welfare of animals and

the promotion of literacy and education for all. The foundation provides literacy and education grants to support summer reading programs, early childhood education programs, and literacy programs for children with special needs.

Eligibility: non-profit organizations (either 501(c)(3) organizations or registered Canadian charities).

Award: between \$1,000 to \$10,000. The average grant is \$1,500..

Deadline: Grant requests will be accepted beginning in February 2013 until October 31, 2013. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis throughout the year. Any grant request received after September 1, 2013 will not be awarded until after January 1, 2014.

General Information: <http://www.buildabear.com/shopping/contents/content.jsp?catId=400002&id=700013>

2013 Literacy Grant Guidelines (pdf) :
http://www.buildabear.com/html/en_US/aboutus/community/2013LiteracyGrantGuidelines.pdf

Title: RGK Foundation Grants

RGK Foundation awards grants in the broad areas of Education, Community, and Health/Medicine. The Foundation's primary interests within Education include programs that focus on formal K-12 education (particularly mathematics, science and reading), teacher development, literacy, and higher education.

Youth development programs supported by the Foundation typically include after-school educational enrichment programs that supplement and enhance formal education systems to increase the chances for successful outcomes in school and life. The Foundation is also interested in programs that attract female and minority students into the fields of mathematics, science, and technology.

Eligibility: Grants are made only to nonprofit organizations certified as tax exempt under Sections 501(c)(3) or 170(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and are classified as "not a private foundation" under Section 509(a). Hospitals, educational institutions, and governmental institutions meeting these requirements are eligible to apply.

Award: The average Foundation grant is \$25,000.

Deadline: All applicants must complete an electronic Letter of Inquiry from the Web site as the first step. RGK Foundation will entertain one electronic Letter of Inquiry (LOI) per organization in a twelve-month period. The Foundation will send an e-mail message either declining your request or inviting you to submit a formal application packet for further consideration.

General Information: <http://www.rgkfoundation.org/public/guidelines#eligible>

Title: Fender Music Foundation Grants

The Fender Music Foundation's mission is to aid non-profit music programs across America. The Foundation accepts grant applications throughout the year from 501(c)(3) organizations that are established, ongoing, and sustainable. Organizations should provide music instruction for people of any age who would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn.

Eligibility: 501(c)(3) organizations.

Award: Musical equipment from \$500 to \$5000 in value.

Deadline: The foundation does not have set dates for reviewing grant candidate forms. We recommend that you simply submit the form at your convenience. If your program is selected, you must submit a completed grant application form within one month of receiving it.

Grants Info: <http://www.fendermusicfoundation.org/grants/index.cfm?sec=info>

OTHER OREGON SCHOOL NEWS

Note that some links are time sensitive and will drop from the host website after a few days.

Rethinking the Notion of 'Noncognitive'

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/01/23/18conley.h32.html?tkn=QVTF0ig0B4WQVdhocP1D0iHKeFYHFYEpq2FV&cmp=clp-edweek>

CB educators: Modify four-day schedule

http://theworldlink.com/news/local/cb-educators-modify-four-day-schedule/article_7f1db0ed-ba25-50a6-99c2-d86d968b14c7.html

Evergreen Middle School students learn about engineering at Hillsboro Reservoir

http://www.oregonlive.com/hillsboro/index.ssf/2013/02/evergreen_middle_school_studen.html

Teaming to learn: Caring for Kids connects older students with younger ones

<http://www.registerguard.com/web/news/cityregion/29450272-41/students-older-elementary-eugene-kids.html.csp>

Centennial Learning Center helps students who struggled elsewhere

http://www.oregonlive.com/gresham/index.ssf/2013/03/centennial_learning_center_hel.html#incart_river

North's small schools ending

<http://registerguard.com/rg/news/local/29501849-75/north-students-schools-anderson-eugene.html.csp>

School Climate: Missing Link in Principal Training?

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/03/06/23principal.h32.html?tkn=RMYP8KG4RqDShScGxdvjDM%2F%2B7zfw27Q7Z5U&cmp=clp-edweek>

Students launch testing 'opt-out' protest

<http://portlandtribune.com/pt/9-news/134462-students-launch-testing-opt-out-protest>

What is it about Finland?

<http://blog.centerforpubliceducation.org/2013/03/22/what-is-it-about-finland/>

EVENTS

2013 National Charter Schools Conference

June 30 – July 3, 2013 Walter E. Washington Convention Center Washington, D.C

The National Charter Schools Conference is the largest gathering of the national charter school movement. 4,000 participants from around the country come to learn, connect and share ideas. Attendees are from organizations that support charters in every way imaginable. We hope you'll join us in Washington, DC this summer!

Information: <http://publiccharters.org/Conference/2013/Home.aspx>

League of Oregon Charter Schools Annual Oregon Charter Schools Conference August 14 & 15, 2013

The League of Oregon Charter Schools Board of Directors would like to invite you to the Annual Oregon Charter Schools Conference for Administrators, Directors, Board Members, Teachers, Support Staff, Founders, Beginners and Accomplished Charter School People.

Save this date! Location and agenda will be announced shortly.

For conference information, please send an email to: Debi Lorence, debilorence@gmail.com

Charter Starters Services

**Need Help? Need a quote on a service? Give Us A Call .
(541) 338-7000 or email charterstarters@gmail.com**

For New Initiatives:

- **Writing the planning grant**
- **Charter application development**
- **Writing the Charter**
- **Board development and training**
- **Negotiation assistance with authorizers**
- **Business plan development**
- **Developing educational model**
- **Accountability systems (roles and responsibilities)**
- **Budget services**
- **Team building**

For Existing Schools:

- **Establishing financial systems and internal controls**
- **Recruitment and hiring of staff**
- **Policy writing**
- **Board training**
- **Project planning, management and implementation support**
- **Strategic planning**
- **Public relations and internal communications**
- **Team building**
- **Conflict resolution/Mediation**
- **School Assessments**

Mark and Lou *Charter Starters*