

Commit to Character CONNECTIONS

June 2008



Supporting respectful, responsible and fair school communities

Character Recognition Evening

On May 2, 2008 the Roy Edwards room at the Education Centre was near capacity with students, staff and volunteers along with their families and friends. Over 400 people were recognized by their peers for demonstrating good character in their various roles around the county. On this evening, 100 were on hand to represent all those embody our Commit to Character initiative. Each was recognized with a certificate and a copy of "Me to We" or "The Three Questions".

Guest speaker Chris Robinson was on hand to talk about what it means to be a good Canadian citizen and his trip to the top of Canada.

Finding Common Ground

Schools will soon be receiving the awaited final version of "Finding Common Ground: Character Development in Ontario Schools, K-12" from the Ministry of Education. As you read through the document, it will be clear to you that schools in the Simcoe County District School Board are well on our way in this critical area of focus. One of the Key Messages presented by the Ministry in this document is that "Character development is about excellence in education, communities that are vibrant and caring, and students who will think critically, feel deeply and act wisely". This document will also include an additional clear focus on Equity and Diversity and its connection with Character Development.

Character Development Initiatives

APM 254 outlines the additional funding provided to support character development initiatives in schools. Please take a moment to review the memo for amounts and eligible purchases.

National Character Education Conference

This fall's conference is November 3rd and 4th in Huntsville. Speakers included Stephen Lewis, Pinball Clemons, Barbara Coloroso and Eva Olsson. The conference *"is dedicated to advancing the educational principles of Character Education with the aim of developing good character in students, teachers, administrators, support staff and community members who support student learning."*

Mark the date on your calendar

Nov 3 and 4, 2008 or visit www.ncec.ca.

School Climate Survey Highlights

- A large majority of students indicated that student safety is important (95% for elementary and 85% for secondary students).
- The majority of both elementary and secondary students (88% and 81%, respectively) agreed that they feel safe at school, with 86% of students in both panels reporting that they also feel safe on their way to school.
- Students who participated in extra-curricular activities had more positive perceptions of school climate than those who did not participate. Participation in extra-curricular activities was higher in the lower grades than in the higher grades. In grade 4, 88% of students reported participating compared with 66% of grade 12 students.

A more detailed analysis of the survey's results is included on page two of this Character Connections.

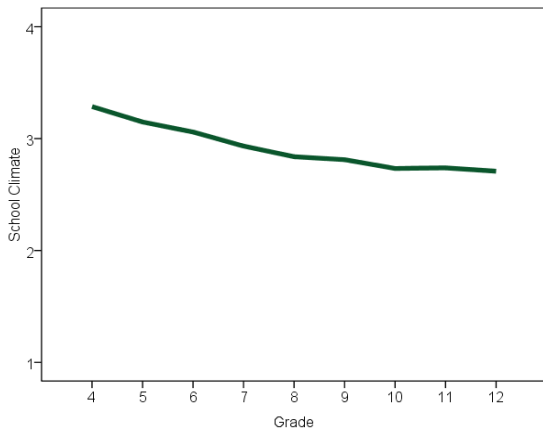
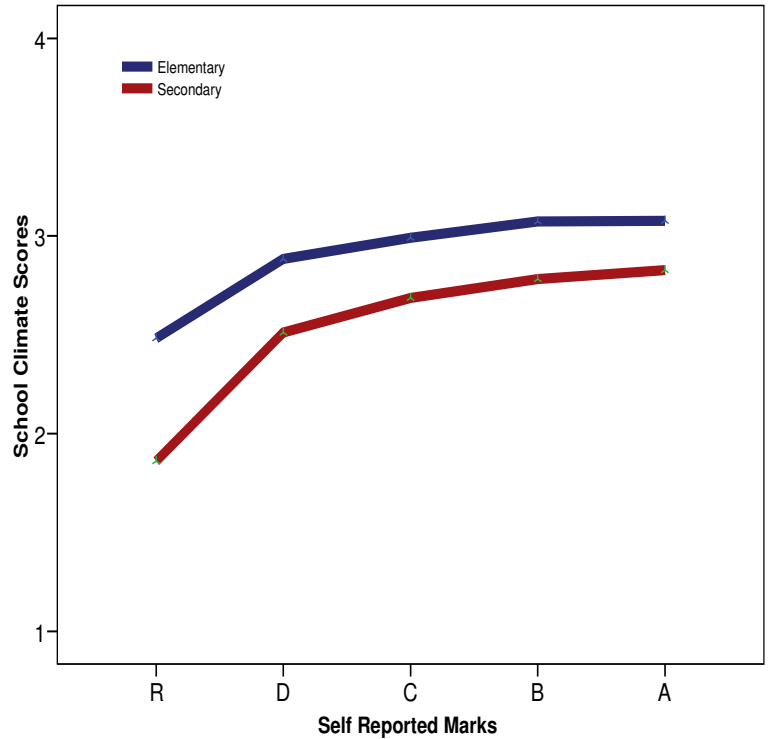


Simcoe County
District School Board

Why Do We Care About School Climate?

In Simcoe County, and worldwide, studies have found a relationship between students' perception of school climate and the grades they achieve in school. The more positively students rated school climate, the higher they reported their grades. The graph shows this relationship based on the 2007 School Climate Survey of SCDSB students in grades 4 to 12.

School Climate was scored from 1 – 4, with 4 indicating the most positive. The 'self reported marks' were assessed by asking students what mark they 'usually' received. The lines indicate that students who score higher academically have a more positive perception of school climate. Students who score lower have more negative perception of school climate.



School climate scores decrease as students progress through the grades. Secondary school students have particularly low school climate scores if they usually receive the grade "R". In general, students have a more positive perception of their school climate in elementary school and more negative perception in secondary school.



Connecting Achievement and Bullying

There is a subset of students who have a link between achievement and school climate. In Simcoe County, about 2% of students say that they usually get the grade 'R'. For students who reported that they bullied someone in the last year, this percentage goes up slightly. If students reported that they were bullied in multiple ways (verbally, physically, and electronically), the percent that usually get the grade 'R' doubles, and if they bullied others in multiple ways, the percent quadruples. For students who bully in multiple ways and are victims in multiple ways, the percentage jumps to over five times the board frequency. These students are found in both elementary and secondary schools and are both males and females, but are the most likely to be secondary school males.

