

2010 FCPS Working
Conditions Survey
Individual Item Prompts
Student Conduct and
Safety Construct

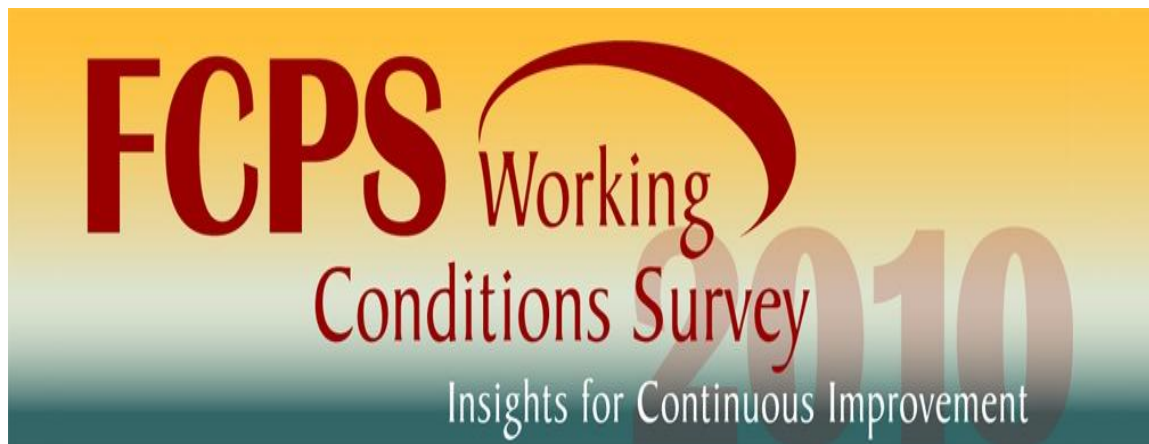


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4.1A: Students at this school understand expectations for their conduct.

For students to be successful, they have to know what is expected of them regarding their behavior. This must go much farther than simply explaining the rules at the beginning of the school year. If rules are set, it is the obligation of both the faculty and administration to follow through consistently with those rules to establish clear boundaries. When a rule is enforced, it is important for the faculty and administration to follow up with students to reestablish the expectations and the relationship. As the school year progresses, rules must be revisited, reminders must be given, and modifications must be made to ensure the best outcomes.

As you reflect on this condition at your school, consider the following: What rules are currently in place and are they consistent across the entire school? Are teachers and administrators consistently enforcing these rules? Is time given by the faculty to following up with students after consequences have been given?

Table Group Activity

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 - Try and capture both administrator and teacher perspective on the prompts
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4.1A: Reflections

What rules are currently in place to address student conduct?

- How many are there?
- Are they effective? How do you know?
- Are they being consistently enforced?
- Are there different rules across classrooms?
- Did teachers have input in the design of school rules?

What steps are in place to support students in meeting these expectations?

- What positive feedback and rewards are in place for meeting these expectations?
- Are there reminders posted?
- Are expectations revisited regularly?
- What happens after a consequence is given? Is this ideal?

How do the different roles of educators contribute to this process at your school?

- What role do school administrators have in establishing and maintaining clear expectations for student conduct?
- What role do teachers have in this process?
- How are new teachers supported in this process?
- What is the role of guidance in this process?

4.1B: Students are caring toward one another.

Students come from a wide variety of home environments, and implicit cultural and social norms. For students to demonstrate specific expected behaviors in a school setting, they must be taught what is expected of them.

As you consider this aspect of your school, discuss what exactly it means for students to be caring towards one another. What behaviors reflect what this definition implies? How can teachers and administrators explicitly teach children to exhibit these behaviors?

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4.1B: Reflections

What does it mean for students to be 'caring' towards one another?

- Are teachers and administrators in agreement of this definition?
- Is this definition equitable?

What behaviors model this definition of caring?

- What steps, lessons, and activities are in place at the school to support and promote this outcome?
- Are there rewards in place for children who demonstrate these preferred behaviors?
- Are there examples and models of this behavior that can be taught to students?

4.1C, D: Students and the faculty make efforts to stop bullying in this school.

Schools must be proactive in addressing the issue of bullying because students cannot learn in an environment where they do not feel safe. Systems must be put in place where students can speak candidly about incidents of bullying and feel safe to do so. Teachers must be active in the school culture to identify bullying. The school must have a clearly defined and consistently upheld set of rules on expectations of student behavior and conduct. In addition to systems within the school, there may also be resources in the community that can provide additional support.

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4.1C,D: Reflections

What systems are in place to address the issue of bullying at the school?

- Are there activities and systems in place to help educate and promote appropriate behavior in students?
- Are teachers properly trained in identifying incidents or outcomes of bullying?
- Are there resources in the community that could support this work?

Are rules clearly defined and consistently enforced on the expectations of student conduct?

- Are they effective? How do you know?
- Are they consistent across the school?

Are children properly trained on what options they have if they are faced with a issue of bullying?

4.1E: Policies and procedures about student conduct are clearly understood by the faculty.

For a school to nurture appropriate conduct in students, policies and procedures must be clearly understood by the faculty. Systems must be in place to train beginning teachers and teachers new to the school of the policies and procedures for student conduct. Communication on the effectiveness and modifications of these systems must occur with the faculty throughout the school year.

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4.1E: Reflections

What systems do you have in place to assure that all teachers clearly understand student conduct policies and procedures?

- What is in place for beginning teachers and teachers new to the school?
- Are they effective? How do you know?

What communication do school administrators have with teachers about this issue?

- How often does it take place?
- Do teachers have a say in the discussion of these policies and expectations?

What evidence do you have that teachers clearly understand these expectations?

- Do teachers receive feedback on the effectiveness of these policies?

4.1F: The rules for student conduct are enforced consistently.

Consistency of discipline is essential to effective school management. As individuals, administrators and teachers both must be careful to follow through with consequences and rewards for all student conduct. But there is a greater challenge for school staff regarding discipline in that rule enforcement must maintain consistency across the school as well.

Research indicates there is often disagreement between teachers and administrators on the quality of discipline and behavioral focus in a school. This suggests a lack of communication on the topic of discipline between the two parties. Successful student conduct plans demand continuous communication between faculty and administration and across administrators and teachers to achieve consistent follow through and faculty buy in.

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4.1F: Reflections

Are you maintaining consistency?

- How do you know if you are maintaining consistency?
- Is your discipline plan equitable for all children?
- Do your consequences match in severity with the other administrators in the school for similar violations?
- if you threaten a consequence for inappropriate behavior, do you always follow through with the action?

Are consequences functioning as consequences from the students' perspective?

- How do you know?

Are faculty and administrative colleagues in communication about discipline?

- Do you follow up with each other about action you take with students?
 - what does the follow up look like and consist of?
- Do you maintain an open door policy to teachers about discipline methods, suggestions, and concerns?
 - Does the staff know you are open to discussing this topic with you?
- Do you revisit policy and procedure for student conduct throughout the school year?
- Do teachers help develop the student conduct rules and procedures?

4.1F: Reflections

If a teacher or administrator is not consistent in their discipline, is there a vehicle for communicating that effectively and safely to the person?

How are new teachers prepared?

- What sort of supports are in place?
- How often are they being given feedback?
- What plans are in place if they are not initially successful with this?

Are elective teachers and EC teachers included in the discussion of consistent student conduct?

- Do they have different rules than core subjects?
- Should they have different rules?
- If rules are different from one grade level to the next, how do elective and EC teachers address the differences in plans throughout their work day?

Do the faculty uphold their end of rule enforcement?

- What sort of feedback do faculty receive on the effectiveness of their consistency?
- If a teacher does not uphold rule enforcement effectively, what happens next?

4.1G: Teachers' efforts to maintain discipline in the classroom are supported.

Successful student discipline strategies in the classroom are dependent on consistent support across the school. If teachers have agreed to utilize the similar discipline strategies across classrooms, then they should work together to see that those strategies are implemented consistently. School administrators should be active participants in the design of discipline policies and procedures so when issues arise, they understand what steps should have taken place prior to their involvement. Continuous communication between teachers and school administrators is important to maintain consistency of discipline. When school administrators intervene in the discipline process, teachers and school administrators should engage in follow up discussion about their actions to ensure everyone on the faculty is working collaboratively.

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4.1G: Reflections

What systems are in place for maintaining student conduct?

- Are teachers and school administrators included in the process?
- What systems common across classrooms? Grade levels? Teams? The entire school?
- Are the current systems effective? How do you know?
- Where could the current system need additional support or revision?

What lines of regular communication are in place to address classroom discipline?

- Do teachers meet consistently with each other to maintain effective classroom management?
- Do teachers and administrators meet consistently to support each other in classroom management?
- Do teachers meet with parents consistently to help maintain effective classroom management?

Are disciplinary consequences for students acting as a deterrent?

Are the student discipline policies and procedures clearly and consistently communicated to students and parents?

What systems are in place to support beginning teachers with classroom management?

4.1H: Teachers and staff work in an environment that is safe.

Safety is essential. Teachers cannot function effectively in an environment that is unsafe. Students cannot learn in an environment that is unsafe.

Often times it isn't the occurrence of an unsafe act itself, but the school's reaction to that incident which creates sustained doubt in staff and students in the safety of their environment. How quickly staff react to incidents; consistency in punishment; follow through; and support of staff all contribute to perception of school safety. Administrative reaction to unsafe student behavior can contribute or detract from building teacher trust and positive school culture.

When addressing the topic of school safety, in addition to issues of security, policy, and protocol, consider a discussion of emotional support for staff, follow up with teachers on action (or inaction) taken by administrators, and possible training for the staff in applicable areas. Keeping communication open on issues of safety can contribute to staff perception of their environment.

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4.1H: Reflections

What policies and protocol are in place for unsafe behavior at school?

- Does the entire staff know the expectations and procedures?
- What steps are in place to determine whether protocol is understood and followed by the staff?
- What feedback is the administration giving to staff (both positive and negative) on the achievement of these expectations?
- What support is in place for new teachers to learn these expectations?

Before an incident occurs...

- What disciplinary steps are in place to deter unwanted behaviors in the classroom and are they being used?
- Have teachers contacted the parents? communicated concern with the administration? school security? support staff?
- Have teachers from lower grade levels been included in the discussion of student behavior and management?
- Have school counselors been notified?

After an incident occurs...

- Is the administration's response consistent with the policies and protocol that are in place?
- Does the administration follow up with teachers on the actions they took or did not take?
- What sort of support is provided for teachers?
- Does the teacher have a way to communicate his/her concerns to the administration in a safe way?

4.11: The physical plant of the school makes students feel safe.

Having a well maintained, organized school can contribute to creating a safe environment for students. The parents and community, the school staff members, and the student body all have a part in maintaining that environment. Teachers have a responsibility to create an inviting learning space in their classrooms. Administrators work hard to provide the resources needed to maintain the facility. Students can do their part to sustain the school by caring for and respecting the building and grounds. Parents and community members can take an active role in school improvements as well as safety issues in the community around the school.

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4.1I: Reflections

What policies and expectations are in place for students that impact the school facility?

- Are those rules common across grade levels, and teams?
- Are they consistently enforced?
- Do all of the faculty know what those expectations are? How do you know?

What are the expectations of teachers' physical classrooms?

- Do teachers all know about these expectations? How do you know?
- What systems are in place to help support the needs of beginning teachers and teachers new to the school in this area?

How are the parents and community included in school maintenance?

- Do parents know how or where they can contribute?
- Is there a plan for recruiting and involving parents, students and community members?
- What systems are in place to educate parents on school needs and supports?

Are there specific areas where the school facilities could use improvement?

- What steps can be taken to address these areas?

4.1J: The rules for student conduct are clearly laid out for faculty.

Regardless of the management plan, a school will have challenges implementing that plan if steps have not been taken to assure the rules have been clearly and consistently explained to the faculty. It is important for all school staff to know the roles and responsibilities teachers and administrators play in a management plan. Rules have a way of being interpreted differently across grade levels, teams, and in different classroom settings. Lines of effective communication across these different areas of the school must be in place to monitor the effectiveness of policies and procedures.

Stating clear rules at the first faculty meeting of the school year is only the first step of an effective and clear management process. Many elements of rule enforcement are situational and context must be carefully considered in every incident. Both teachers and administrators need continuous feedback from each other on the effectiveness of their management process, and their interpretation and enforcement of rules and consequences. Feedback is critical for continued refinement of faculty roles, responsibilities and the management process.

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4.1J: Reflections

Are the rules your school has in place to support effective student conduct clearly understood by all members of the faculty?

- How do you know?

What processes/systems are in place to make rules for student conduct clear to faculty?

- Are rules posted around the school?
- Is there a faculty handbook with clearly outlined rules, procedures, and expectations of staff?
- What systems are in place to support beginning teachers and teachers new to the school regarding student conduct?

Are systems of communication in place to support rules for student conduct and management?

- Do teachers receive feedback regarding their role in managing student conduct throughout the year?
- Do administrators received feedback regarding their role in managing student conduct throughout the school year?
- How can lines of communcation be improved?
- What role do parents take in this process?

How does the school manage the conditional aspect of student conduct management?

- Are there ways to improve rules and systems to address the situational aspect of student conduct?
- How does the school address variations in rule interpretation or consequence implementation across grade level, team, administrator or other school area?