The Importance of a Positive School Culture

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Abstract

School culture and school climate are intangible, but essential elements within a school environment. These terms are frequently used interchangeably and school culture and school climate will be defined, with school culture being the adopted term throughout this paper. Climate is more relational; it is illustrated by the attitudes and behaviors of the school staff and is focused on the style of the school’s organizational system. Whereas, culture is a deeper level of reflection of shared values, beliefs, and traditions between staff members. School leaders play a vital role in developing and enhancing the school culture. Positive school cultures provide a safe, supportive, encouraging, inviting, and challenging environment for students and staff, which in turn allows students’ academic achievement to evolve. Interventions and strategies for creating a positive school culture will be recognized and discussed. This paper will supply an overview of characteristics that make up a positive school culture as well as a toxic school culture, will discuss the importance of school leaders, and will examine strategies and interventions for creating a positive school culture. This paper will also discuss an Adlerian perspective on school culture and review implications for school counselors.
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School Culture and Student Achievement

Introduction

Almost every human being has his or her own interpretation of how “culture” is defined. Unfortunately, there is no ubiquitous definition of culture and the term has not ceased to evolve throughout the generations. With each organization having its own characterization of culture, it is necessary to have a broad understanding of how the term is represented. The first modern definition of culture was conceived by an anthropologist named, Edward Tyler, and was defined as, “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (as cited in Tharp, 2009, p. 3). Later, anthropologist Clifford Geertz refurbished the definition of culture to, “the fabric of meaning in terms of which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions; culture is an ordered system of meaning and of symbols in terms of which social interaction takes place” (as cited in Tharp, 2009, p. 3). With the latter definition of culture being used more widely today (Tharp, 2009, p. 3), this paper will further discuss the variety of aspects that shape a healthy culture within a school and contrarily, those aspects that create a toxic culture within a school environment. Furthermore, this paper will address the importance of leadership within the school, interventions and strategies that help create a positive school culture and will look at the Adlerian perspective on school culture and the implications for school counselors.

School Culture and School Climate

Culture and climate tend to be used synonymously although each has its own unique meaning. Therefore, culture and climate will both be explained, with culture being the embraced term throughout the paper. To begin, climate can be thought of as the atmosphere or attitude (Adeogun & Olisaemeka, 2011) of a school, while culture can be understood as the personality
of the school (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015). Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) refer to climate as, “an aggregate measure of school’s characteristic, such as relationships between parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as the physical facilities on the ground” (p. 552). Likewise, Peterson and Deal (2009b) claim that, “climate emphasizes the feeling and current tone of the school, the emotional content of the relationships, and the morale of the place” (p. 9). Further, the National School Climate Council defines school climate as, “norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe” (Cobb, 2014, p. 16). Hence, the climate of a school can change hour-to-hour, day-to-day. Think about how often the attitude of an individual can vary throughout one day. Imagine the morning brings about a gloomy outlook on the day because there is ten inches of snow on the ground, but a few minutes later, the individual receives an email that he or she has been promoted; that would greatly shift a person’s attitude in a matter of minutes.

Alternatively, Tharp (2009) explains culture very simply as, “involving three basic human activities: what people think, what people do, and what people make” (p. 3). The author goes on to further explain that culture is “shared, learned, transmitted cross-generationally, symbolic, adaptive, and integrated” (p. 3). Therefore, culture is much more difficult to change because of the numerous elements involved. Some of these include: the climate, the mission and vision, routines, rituals, ceremonies, norms, symbols, stories, values, and beliefs (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2005, p. 28). Because culture is something that is transmitted over time, it is critical that leaders within the school work hard to ensure a positive school climate and culture to provide students and teachers with the best possible experiences and opportunities. Leaders must understand the climate of the school in order to change or maintain the culture of the school.
Importance of a Positive School Culture

All human beings have a need for belonging and a sense of community. We all want to feel like we are a part of something and are contributing to the betterment of society. Research has found when teachers and students feel a sense of community, he or she is more satisfied with the work that is done, is more likely to attend school, enjoy what he or she is doing, and has higher achievement (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 11). When school cultures focus on strengths, collaboration, productivity, communication, relationships, improvement, and kindness (Peterson & Deal, 2009b, pp. 12-14), the individuals who are a part of that community will be much more likely to succeed because he or she will feel a sense of significance and encouragement, rather than competition and hopelessness. Students and staff who feel that compassion and goodwill are valued are more likely to treat and acknowledge others with those same values and respect (Macready, 2009, p. 215). Additionally, individuals who share a set a values, beliefs, norms, and traditions are more likely to be prosperous in individual or shared accomplishments and responsibilities (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 13).

On top of this, schools may be the only place that an individual feels grounded and supported. The culture of the school determines how teachers and students behave, feel, and think (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 9). Further, a positive school culture guides people to focus on certain aspects, encourages commitment, increases motivation, and stimulates individuals to improve performance and feel competent (Peterson & Deal, 2009b, p. 11). Therefore, it is essential that leaders in schools are working to create a safe, caring, responsive, and positive school culture to assure individuals are provided with the opportunities to be successful throughout his or her life. Peterson and Deal (2009a) highlighted how a positive school culture is important for student achievement concisely as, “the key to successful school performance is
heart and spirit infused into relationships among people, their efforts to serve all students, and a shared sense of responsibility for learning” (p. 7).

**Elements of School Culture**

**Mission, Vision, and Values**

At the foundation of school culture lays the mission and vision for the school. Underlying the mission and vision statements are the values the school holds to determine what philosophies and standards the individuals will assimilate and incorporate into his or her everyday teaching and learning (Rhodes, Stevens, & Hemmings, 2011, p. 83). Almost all schools, as well as specific departments within the school, have a mission and vision statement. Even though these are called statements, they are embodied by all of the values, beliefs, norms, and assumptions the school holds. The mission and vision mirror what the school wishes and hopes to eventually become and accomplish (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 61). These help individuals feel a sense of shared responsibility and passion and allows for a deeper spiritual and emotional connection to a common purpose (Peterson & Deal, 2009a p. 62).

In addition to the mission and vision, a school has values, beliefs, assumptions, and norms that guides and controls the behavior of the individuals involved. Values are expressed as the way the school communicates what it represents and ushers decision-making and priorities (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 67). Beliefs are how we understand the world and people around us, whereas assumptions are a set of “beliefs, perceptions, and values that guide behavior” (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 14). Collectively, the term norms encapsulate all of these aspects. Norms are unspoken expectations and rules that staff and students are supposed to follow based on the beliefs, values, and assumptions of the school (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 14). Generally, these
elements are what the leadership team needs to fully understand and embrace before any change or improvement can be made within the school culture.

**Rituals, Traditions, and Ceremonies**

Rituals, traditions, and ceremonies are some of the visible elements to a school’s culture. These provide continuous meaning to the life of the school and the values the school holds. Holding ceremonies, participating in rituals, and celebrating traditions supplies opportunities to gather together and reinforce the mission, vision, and purpose of the school. Also, these arrange a space for teachers, staff, and students to form stronger communities, decompress, have fun, and exhibit companionship (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 40).

Rituals are “procedures or routines that are infused with deeper significance (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 92).” Each school has hundreds of routines each day, such as saying hello to each student as he or she walks in the door, but it is when the routines are made into rituals that they become meaningful and impactful. Likewise, traditions are “significant events that have a special history and meaning and occur year in and year out” (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 41). Examples of traditions may be a back-to-school barbeque at the end of the summer, an open house for new parents at the beginning of the school year, sending a card to staff members who are ill, and other similar events. Similarly, ceremonies are larger events that happen periodically. Ceremonies are “elaborate, culturally sanctioned events that provide a welcome spiritual boost” (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 42). These can also occur for tragedies, but are used as a time to gather together and focus on the values of the school.

**History and Stories**

A school’s mission, vision, values, rituals, traditions, and ceremonies are all elements of the culture that are current and happening in the present. When discussing the history and stories
of an organization, the past is being represented. The schools past are where all of the above mentioned elements originate from and for that reason, it is of upmost importance to know and understand the history of the school. The essential characteristics of the school culture are formed over time and the values take shape in the course of the schools development (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 74). Learning from past mistakes and successes is vital to creating and maintaining a positive school culture (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 75). One influential way of helping staff understand the school’s history is to invite veteran teachers and faculty to present at a staff development training (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 48). The retelling of the past can bring some necessary initiatives into action, revive traditions and rituals that have shriveled away, and assist staff in surrendering previous obsolete memories (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 48).

In like manner, stories are an extremely effective way to impart important information from the past. Today, policy makers are incredibly focused on data and improving students’ achievement scores that principals and administrators have lost sight of what helps students succeed. Being able to recall stories may be much more meaningful and influential in reconnecting teachers and administrators to what is important for teaching and the values the school holds. Every story that is told has a different purpose, no matter how big or small (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 93). Even the stories about how a veteran teacher helped show a new teacher around the school or the story of staff members arguing over which intervention should be put in place for students is fundamental in teaching about the values and mission of the school (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 94).

**Artifacts, Architecture, and Symbols**

Lastly, the artifacts, architecture, and symbols of a school are key elements to creating and maintaining a positive school culture. The artifacts and symbols are the tangible objects that
represent the intangible values and beliefs of the school (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 151). These have a variety of possibilities such as: logos, mascots, banners, awards, mission statement, trophies, past achievements, and the like (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 153). Additionally, the administrators can serve as “walking symbols” as he or she sends messages through words, actions, and body language (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 152).

Furthermore, the physical environment of the school building and the surrounding area are essential in influencing how individuals think and feel about what is valued. If teachers and students enter a rundown, stuffy and dirty school each day, will he or she be motivated to perform at his or her best ability? Most likely, he or she would feel unhappy unmotivated, and distracted (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 150). Imagine a school library with ripped books and outdated computers but a fully renovated brand new football stadium, what would teachers, students, and parents think the school values (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p.149)? It is not necessary for schools to have an endless budget in order to maintain the physical environment of the school. Displaying student’s colorful artwork, awards, and the values of the school can be enough to support individuals in feeling optimistic and happy about being at school (Peterson & Deal, 2009a, p. 149).

**Toxic School Cultures**

“To see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another, to feel with the heart of another” (as cited in Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 135), a profound quote by Alfred Adler, is contradictory of a toxic school culture. Toxic school cultures lack a mission and vision, value laziness and apathy, appreciate separateness and exclusivity, and have negative peer relationships (Peterson, 2002, p. 3). These cultures focus on failures and use these as an excuse to remain stagnant (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 21). As Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) stated,
“toxic school cultures encourage individuals to see failures as the inevitable results of circumstances outside of their control rather than as opportunities for improvement” (p. 21). Unfortunately, this type of culture typically leads to bullying behaviors. “A person is bullied when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons. Bullying often occurs in situations where there is a power or status difference” (Bradshaw, Waasdorp, Debnam, & Johnson, 2014, p. 597). Additionally, teachers and faculty tend to zero in on the weak aspects of the administration and the school’s procedures and in return use those performances to legitimize his or her negative behaviors (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 59). What’s worse is some of those teachers are content with his or her performance and the behaviors may be used as a bonding mechanism between teachers.

Complicated enough, these teachers may be the individuals who speak up most commonly in meetings, dress very professionally, have the most organized classrooms, and collaborate most energetically (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 60). However, are the energetic collaborations aligning with the goal of promoting and encouraging all students to succeed, or are the teachers collaborating to focus on what is going to be most beneficial to him or her? Of course, not all teachers and faculty within a toxic school culture share the same mindset.

Although, the teachers and students who have never experienced a different type of culture will come to assume that the toxic culture is what is normal (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 61). Thinking back to the elements of a positive school culture, toxic school cultures have these same elements, but the elements are perceived very differently. For example, the school’s traditions might be treating students with sarcasm and humiliation, the ceremonies may be forged and lackluster, the physical environment could be polluted and ancient, the artifacts and symbols
are possibly dated and tired, and the stories could be of pessimistic attitudes and unfavorable actions.

**Assessing School Culture**

Considering the importance of understanding the culture of an individual school and the wide range of positive or negative aspects the school embraces, Gruenert and Valentine developed the Culture Typology Activity in 2006 to assess the type of culture within the school. This assessment allows individuals to recognize and rate the degree to which he or she observes and engages in certain behaviors within the school environment (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 66). This activity is not judging the culture of the school, but rather allowing individuals to tabulate the actions at the school. Furthermore, the Culture Typology Activity serves as an initiator for school leaders to discuss and reveal what type of culture his or her school currently has and what their preferred culture might look like (Gruenert & Whitaker, p. 66).

In brief, this assessment looks at twelve key aspects of school culture and six types of cultures. The twelve key aspects this activity uses are: student achievement, collegial awareness, shared values, decision making, risk taking, trust, openness, parent relations, leadership, communication, socialization, and organization history (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, pp. 67-69). Along with these, the six types of school cultures are: toxic, fragmented, balkanized, contrived collegial, comfortable collaborative, and collaborative (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 67). Under each column are descriptors of the targets an individual would want to aim for to achieve the desired culture. For example, under the column “Toxic” in the row “Student Achievement,” the descriptor states, “Many teachers believe that if students fail it is the students’ fault.” Or, under the column “Collaborative” in the row “Student Achievement,” the descriptor states,
“Teachers are given time to discuss student achievement and spend this time critically analyzing one another’s practice” (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 67).

Ideally, all teachers within the school would complete this activity. To do so, teachers use the scale of zero to ten, with ten meaning the behavior occurs all the time at school and zero meaning the behavior has never happened, to rate the degree to which the descriptor in each cell describes the behavior within his or her school (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 75). After rating all descriptors in each column, the teachers will add up the totals in each column and the column that has the highest number of points exemplifies the type of culture the teacher believes the school is most aligned with (Gruenert & Whitaker, p. 76). If the majority of teachers have highest numbers in the columns of a Contrived Collegial Culture, a Comfortable Collaborative Culture, or a Collaborative Culture, the school is on the right track of embracing a positive school culture, whereas if most teachers have high numbers in the columns of a Balkanized Culture, a Fragmented Culture, or a Toxic Culture, then the school is most likely involved in a toxic school culture (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 77). From this activity, school leaders can begin the conversations on how to begin the move from the school’s current culture to a more positive school culture or how to maintain the positive culture that it has currently.

Likewise, Gruenert and Valentine created another instrument in 2006, The School Culture Survey, to help with assessing the present culture within a school. Because the ideal culture of a school is Collaborative, the Culture Typology Activity helps teachers and school leaders understand how close or far away the school is from a positive and collaborative culture, whereas the School Culture Survey helps teachers and school leaders learn how much their school is collaborative (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 80). This survey has descriptors that represent typical behaviors of a collaborative school culture and therefore supports school
leaders on how to create a collaborative school culture if that does not already exist. With the survey being comprised of 35 items, Gruenert and Valentine sorted the items into six main categories. These categories are collaborative leadership, teacher collaboration, professional development, unity of purpose, collegial support, and learning partnership (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, pp. 84–85). Again, teachers complete this survey by rating each item on a scale of one to five, with one representing strongly disagree and five meaning strongly agree. Once completed, teachers can see what items are rated the highest and the lowest and discuss if those items seem to be fitting or unfitting of the current school culture. Additionally, when teachers complete both the School Culture Typology Activity and the School Culture Survey, the school leaders and teachers will have a much more comprehensive understanding of the school’s culture. In the end, school leaders can decide what to do with the information but in the least, he or she has the background, support, and information on how to create or maintain a positive school culture.

**School Leadership**

**Strengths-Based Leadership**

Together with the key elements of a school culture comes the importance of school leadership. Every group of people needs a leader and just about every person has a leader he or she remembers from some point in life. In a 2005 to 2008 study, Gallup administered a study that interviewed and researched more than 10,000 followers (as cited in Rath & Conchie, 2008). At one point, the followers were asked why they follow the most influential leader in their life (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 2). The three key findings from this study were: the most effective leaders are always investing in strengths, the most effective leaders surround themselves with the right people and then maximize their team, and the most effective leaders understand their
followers’ needs (Rath & Conchie, 2008, pp. 2-3). Additionally, these followers were asked what that influential leader contributed to their life. From there, Gallup studied the 25 most commonly used words and these were trust, compassion, stability, and hope (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 82). If leaders can instill and fulfill these basic needs within the followers’ head and hearts, those cultures and groups are likely to be successful.

There is not a comprehensive list of characteristics that makes an excellent leader because what is most important is that leaders understand and utilize the unique strengths that he or she possesses. Dr. Donald O. Clifton, leadership researcher and Father of Strengths Psychology, stated that his greatest discovery from his years of leadership research was (as cited in Rath & Conchie, 2008):

A leader needs to know his strengths as a carpenter knows his tools, or as a physician knows the instruments at her disposal. What great leaders have in common is that each truly knows his or her strengths – and can call on the right strength at the right time. This explains why there is no definitive list of characteristics that describes all leaders. (p. 13)

Furthermore, Tim Judge and Charlice Hurst studied thousands of men and women over a 25 year period by giving these individuals self-evaluations regarding career and life satisfaction, successes, health, education, and the like (as cited in Rath & Conchie, 2008). The results of this study found that people who had higher self-confidence in their younger years were more likely to have higher income levels and career satisfaction later in life (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 15). Also, the researchers found a relationship between early self-confidence and physical health, with individuals who have lower self-confidence early on being three times more likely to have health problems later in life (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 16). Overall, this study was able to show that young people who are aware of his or her own strengths and are self-confident early on are
more likely to have an increased advantage in life. Most importantly, this research emphasized the priority of leaders to understand their strengths and in return, help others to uncover their own strengths as early on as possible (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 16).

**Transformational Leadership**

With this in mind, James Burns, founder of leadership studies, described two popular types of leadership styles, transactional and transformational (as cited in Allen, Grigsby & Peters, 2015). Transactional leadership is focused on the leader creating and maintaining relationships with the followers and the purpose of these relationships are to exchange things that are of value (Allen et al., 2015, p. 3). This type of leadership is profitable when the leader and followers are content with how things stand currently (Allen et al., 2015, p. 3). If leaders want to be impactful and make a change, then transformational leadership is the style to practice. Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) define transformational leadership as, “a leader’s ability to recognize the potential skills of an employee and engage the complete person and not just particular traits” (p. 3), relating quite closely to strengths-based leadership. Also, Burns (as cited in Allen et al., 2015, p. 3) stated that a transformational leader would be able to unite staff in reaching for goals that matched the leader’s vision for the school and could inspire and involve even the most withdrawn individual. Furthermore, these types of leaders energize and influence the staff because he or she values the work the teachers do and are constantly stimulating the staff to accomplish more (Allen et al., 2015, p. 17).

Allen, Grigsby, and Peters (2015) performed a study examining the relationship between transformational leadership, school culture, and student achievement. In this study, the researchers collected data from school principals and the teachers within the same school on the degree to which the principals displayed characteristics of a transformational leader and the
teacher’s perceptions of the school climate (Allen et al., 2015). Further, the five factors that were used to define transformational leadership were idealized attributes, idealized behaviors, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Allen et al., 2015, p. 15). This study found a great relationship between transformational leadership and a positive school culture. Teachers who believed that their principal exhibited the characteristics of a transformational leader seemed to identify more closely with the principal and felt more positive about the school culture (Allen et al., 2015, p. 15). Although indirect, when these teachers are aligning with the principal, the teacher feels more confident in his or her abilities and therefore is able to excel in providing high quality instruction to the students (Allen et al., 2015, p. 16). Furthermore, when the principal and other leaders within the school are encouraging and developing teacher strengths, not only can leaders motivate teachers to try new strategies and be accepting of change, but he or she can also positively influence the school culture (Allen et al., 2015, p. 18).

**Appreciative Leadership**

In like manner to strengths-based leadership and transformational leadership comes appreciative leadership. Briefly, appreciative leadership comes from the field of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Cooperrider and Whitney (as cited in Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015) defined AI as:

> The co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discovery of what gives a system life when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to heighten positive potential. (p. 236)
In a study of 20 cases, all of who were using AI, Bushe and Kassam (as cited in Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015, p. 237) found that transformational change happened when there was a focus on changing the way people think rather than what people do and staff had the freedom and support to initiate and establish their own ideas. Further, there are five main principles AI is based on. These are as follows:

1. The Constructivist Principle: Organizations are living, human constructions. Leaders know and understand that an organization is a human construction and is ever changing.
2. The Principle of Simultaneity: The questions asked and the changes made are simultaneous. Change is embedded in the types of questions we ask.
3. The Poetic Principle: All topics are open to exploration and re-consideration. There is no need to relive the past. All people are acknowledged and validated for contributing.
4. The Anticipatory Principle: Human beings are always looking and anticipating the future.

Together with this, an appreciative leader is one who pursues the above principles, wants to be a motive of change, and wants only to nurture the best in individuals (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015, p. 237). This type of leader is a role model of AI and works toward being an equal with all staff. Appreciative leaders work diligently to fulfill the four basic needs of followers mentioned earlier – trust, compassion, stability, and hope. Appreciative leadership is so effective in schools because schools have been situated in a hierarchal structure of leadership and are typically focused on past failures (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015, p. 239). Appreciative leadership does not look at solving the past problems or maintaining ladder leadership, but rather it supports variation and change and allows staff to makes these new and
positive solutions. Overall, appreciative leadership, transformational leadership, and strengths-based leadership recognize the strengths in the staff and the organization, believe in changing the way people think before changing the way people behave, and aspire to have all staff and leaders on the same playing field (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015, p. 239).

**Strategies for Creating a Positive School Culture**

Shaping a new school culture or improving the current culture is a long and difficult task. Gruenert and Whitaker (2015) discuss a few key aspects to shape a new school culture. The first aspect is to understand the concept of school culture, know what it is and what it is not (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 3). Then, it is important to understand your school’s culture by knowing leverage points and barriers, and recognizing and acknowledging the current status of the school as well as what the past entailed. Once all of this is understood, one can begin to shape the school culture by building a team, describing the change that is wanted, appreciating what is working well, and building the capacity to change (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 3). Once the first two steps are fully grasped, there are a variety of commonly used strategies that can be helpful in shaping the new culture. School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), Restorative Justice, and the Responsive Classroom (RC) are three strategies that have shown to be effective and will be briefly discussed below.

**School-wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS)**

SWPBS has the overarching goal of developing and improving a positive school culture and establishing behavioral supports to help reduce the occurrence of behavior problems and increase the social and academic outcomes of all students (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 302; Galassi & Akos, 2007, p. 241). It is important to understand that SWPBS is “focused more toward modeling and rewarding positive behavior than relying on punishment or exclusion.
approaches to behavior problems” (Caldarella, Shatzer, Gray, Young, & Young, 2011, p. 3).

Bosworth and Judkins (2014) describe SWPBS as, “a set of systems that define and teach appropriate behaviors, reinforce positive behaviors, discourage problem behaviors through consistent consequences, promote positive student-teacher interactions by focusing adult attention on positive behavior, and collect behavior data on which to base decisions” (p. 302).

The core components of SWPBS consist of identifying the fundamental school-wide outcomes for student learning and behavior, developing the systems to implement SWPBS, understanding and utilizing evidence-based practices, and collecting and using data to monitor the progress toward the agreed upon school-wide outcomes for student achievement (Galassi & Akos, 2007, p. 241). In order to achieve these core components and effectively implement SWPBS, it is essential to form a leadership team within the school that will be responsible for overseeing and supporting the implementation (Galassi & Akos, 2007, p. 242).

Additionally, SWPBS is based on a three-tiered prevention model with the first tier being universal, school-wide, interventions, the second tier being targeted interventions, and the third tier being intensive interventions (Caldarella et al., 2011, p. 2). Flannery, Frank, Kato, Doren, and Fenning (2013) explain the three tiers in simple terms. The universal school-wide interventions “are designed for all students and staff, in place across all school environments, and are expected to successfully support about 80 percent of the students” (Flannery et al., 2013, p. 268). When these interventions are ineffective for students, he or she will receive more targeted and intensive services, which is the second tier. “Targeted interventions are designed for subgroups of students who are not responsive to universal interventions but who do not require the most intensive individualized support” (Flannery et al., 2013, p. 269). This tier typically consists of approximately 15 percent of the students and the supports are groups such as social
skills and organizational skills. Lastly, the third tier is the most intensive of interventions and this would be for “students who are not responding to the other two levels of interventions and thus are in need of individually designed supports” (Flannery et al., 2013, p. 269). These interventions require an immense amount of time and therefore, schools strive to have less than five percent of their students within this tier (Flannery et al., 2013, p. 269).

When schools implement the universal interventions, all students and staff are influenced. In order to improve the school culture and establish behavioral supports, the leadership team can discuss the strategies at the universal level and work hard to advocate for positive and steady classrooms, as well as a healthy school climate (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 302). If successful at implementing effective school-wide strategies, then the majority of students would not need further interventions. Further, Bosworth and Judkins (2014) found that following authoritative discipline practices provided both high structure and high support (p. 302). The authors explained that when “rules are clearly defined, consistently enforced, and perceived as fair” (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 302), this would be seen as high structure, and high support would be seen as, “student-teacher relationships are positive and students have access to resources that assist them to master academic and social behaviors” (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 302). Additionally, Gregory and Cornell (2009) found that “students attending authoritative schools report higher feelings of safety and security than peers in authoritarian schools” (as cited in Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 302). To be successful in implementing SWPBS, the leadership team must clearly identify and define the expectations within the school, teach those expectations so all students undoubtedly understand them, acknowledge and reinforce the behaviors when a student is seen following the expectations, address the problem behaviors, and persistently collect, analyze, and use data to make future decisions (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014, p. 304).
Restorative Justice

One effective strategy that can be used for tier 1 of the SWPBS model is Restorative Justice. Restorative Justice began as a concept and was used as part of the criminal justice services to give victims the opportunity to explain to the offender the impact the crime had on him or her (Hopkins, 2015, p. 22). The term Restorative Justice has now been transitioning into the idea of a Restorative Culture, or a restorative process, rather than just a concept. According to the Restorative Justice Council in the United Kingdom (as cited in Hopkins, 2015), restorative justice is a practice that, “can be used anywhere to prevent conflict, build relationships, and repair harm by enabling people to communicate effectively and positively” (p. 22). Because this practice was seen to be effective within the criminal justice program, many schools have started to adopt a similar mindset as it can really be used as a “proactive approach to preventing harm and conflict and activities that repair harm where conflicts have already arisen” (Hopkins, 2015, p. 22).

Belinda Hopkins (2015) has created a clear and teachable framework of restorative practice that helps individuals truly grasp how to incorporate this practice into his or her own workplace culture. She calls it the 5:5:5 model, standing for five core beliefs, five areas of language, and five stages or steps that are all used to encapsulate a restorative practice. The five core beliefs are as follows (Hopkins, 2015, p. 24):

1. Everyone has their own unique perspective on a situation or event and needs an opportunity to express this in order to feel respected, valued, and listened to.
2. What people think at any given moment influences how they feel at that moment, and these feelings inform how they behave.
3. Empathy and consideration for others is crucial to the health and wellbeing of us all.
4. Our unmet needs drive our behavior.

5. The opportunity to engage in empathetic collaborative problem-solving affirms and empowers people.

These beliefs not only help to explain how an organization could develop a restorative culture, but are also used as the groundwork for the five steps of restorative interaction (Hopkins, 2015, p. 26). The following five steps would be used in discussions, conflict resolution, mediation, group problem-solving, and other similar situations.

1. Following initial introductions and explanations, people share their experiences of what has happened.

2. Everyone shares what was going through their mind and how these thoughts impacted on their emotional responses.

3. Everyone then reflects on the impact of what has happened, who has been affected and how.

4. People reflect on what needs had been unmet and ignored at the time of the incident and what they need to move on.

5. Using these needs as the basis for discussion, everyone collaborates to find mutually acceptable ways forward.

By valuing and committing to the five core beliefs, following the five step process, and demonstrating this practice at the universal level, schools will have a strong and successful framework that hopefully all students and staff would be able to follow.

In addition to 5:5:5 model that Belinda Hopkins presents, Tom Macready (2009) shares four essential features that a Restorative Culture would include. These are: an emphasis on respect for the other, an emphasis on dialogue and fair process, an emphasis on structure and
support, and a relational perspective on behavior (Macready, 2009, p. 216). Within these four features are the beliefs, language, and stages that Belinda Hopkins presented. Additionally, one of the most common practices used within a Restorative Culture is the Circle Process. Within a Circle Process, “all voices are heard in turn around the circle, with ground rules agreed to ensure people have their say without interruption or challenge” (Hopkins, 2015, p. 27). This idea of a circle allows all members to feel like he or she is a part of the group, everyone can see one another, and no certain person is in charge; everyone is at the same level. Incorporating the use of restorative practices at the universal school-wide level will help develop a sense of belonging and significance within each student as well as staff and in return will hopefully help build relationships, encourage positivity, empowerment, kindness, communication, and honesty.

The Responsive Classroom (RC)

The Responsive Classroom can also be used as a tier 1 intervention. When schools adopt SWPBS as the overarching school intervention and incorporate restorative practices into everyday practices, the school has the ability and resources to create a positive and successful school culture. When staff and students fully understand the beliefs and stages within a restorative culture and adopt the circle process, teachers will feel capable and empowered to make a change for the students and possibly even oneself. The Responsive Classroom approach is completely executed by the teachers and therefore, teachers need to feel supported in his or her ability to provide a caring, warm, open, and relationship-based classroom before the RC approach can be fully implemented.

The RC approach was initially created by the Northeast Foundation for Children, where the goal was to “create classrooms environments that are conducive to children’s social, emotional, and academic growth” (as cited in Baroody, Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, & Curby, 2014,
p. 71). With this goal being quite broad, Baroody et al. (2014) defined the RC approach in a more practical sense and said it is “designed to provide teachers with skills needed to create a caring, well-managed classroom environment that ultimately strengthen teachers’ instructional efforts, improve teachers’ and students’ social and relational skills, and enhance students’ academic and social outcomes” (p. 71). The RC approach is simplistically focused on forming positive student-teacher relationships. Studies have shown that students who have closer student-teacher relationships have in turn had higher levels of school engagement and achievement and better school adjustment. Likewise, teachers who have closer student-teacher relationships have shown to have higher levels of warmth and affection, as well as pleasure and enjoyment in relationships (Baroody et al., 2014, p. 70).

The RC approach is similar to restorative practices as it has specific principles and practices that are incorporated into the everyday classroom. For example, each morning the teacher and students meet for morning meeting by forming a circle, greeting one another, sharing news about oneself and respond to certain questions the teacher or other students ask (Baroody et al., 2014, p. 71). This practice can be very helpful in forming positive and healthy relationships with peers as well as student-teacher relationships. The Restorative Classroom practices are: morning meeting, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, academic choice, guided discovery, classroom organization, working with families, and collaborative problem solving (Baroody et al., 2014, p. 72). All of these practices are very similar to the restorative practices as they focus on collaboration, forming relationships, feeling a sense of belonging and significance, problem solving, and everyone having a voice and being heard. When SWPBS, Restorative Justice, and the Responsive Classroom are used
simultaneously within the school environment, the culture of the school is very likely to begin transforming and developing into a positive and healthy culture.

**An Adlerian Perspective on Culture**

Many children are spending the majority of their day within a school environment. Teachers, administration, and other school staff often times serve the role of the child’s parents because children can be in the school environment for up to eight or even ten hours a day. This is one of the reasons why having a positive school culture is so incredibly important. Alfred Adler believed there were three daily tasks of living that all issues in life are categorized within. These are the community/friendship task, occupation/work task, and love/relationship task (Oberst & Stewart, 2003). All of these life tasks require individuals to be socially interested. In addition to being socially interested and fulfilling the three life tasks, individuals need to feel a sense of significance, belonging, and safety in order to live a healthy and successful life. When thinking about children, he or she not only needs to feel significant, safe, and belonged, but also must feel capable, connected, as if he or she counts, or is valued, and have courage. These are called the “Crucial C’s” (Soheili, Alizadeh, Murphy, Bajestani, & Ferguson, 2015, p. 452). As long as the school leaders strive to have and create a positive school culture, then the school environment is a paramount setting for children to begin accomplishing the three life tasks, becoming socially interested, meeting the needs of the crucial c’s and feeling a sense of significance, belonging, and safety.

**The Three Life Tasks**

The school environment provides abundant opportunities to help children, as well as adults, fulfill the three life tasks that Adler sets out. A positive school culture focuses considerably on cooperation among students and staff. Alfred Adler believed that the “main
problems in life are problems of human cooperation” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 131).

Alfred Adler believed that all questions in life are categorized into three major life problems (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 131). These problems are communal life, work, and love. Not only are these the main problems and questions throughout life, but also the three main necessities to live a successful and healthy life (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 131). Just as human beings need to work cooperatively to be successful, the three life tasks work cooperatively to ensure success among all groups.

**Occupation.** When understanding the importance of school culture being a promoter of the three life tasks, we see a student attending school and working to be successful within school as his or her occupation at that time in life. Each child has different abilities and skills, but the teachers and staff within the school are lucky to be able to help the children build on their current capabilities, as well as develop new proficiencies. Children are always striving to improve his or her knowledge and continue to accomplish new milestones throughout life. Teachers are making themselves useful to the students and typically will feel a sense of worth and significance when he or she sees the children succeeding (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Additionally, when children are surrounded in a positive school culture, the child will work hard to better his or her knowledge and understanding of the world around them in order to be useful to someone else in the future and in return, feel a sense of worth and meaning within life (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 132).

**Community.** Likewise, a positive school culture provides a caring, welcoming, and cooperative community for children and adults. This life task goes along hand-in-hand with the occupation tasks. Human beings have been known to be more effective in his or her occupation when cooperating in some way with another human being (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).
When individuals learned to cooperate, the division of labor was created, which therefore increased the amount of jobs because of the different levels of training and abilities that human beings had. This allowed all individuals to contribute to the greater community (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 132). A positive school culture focuses intensely on creating a welcoming and comfortable community for all individuals. It is in these types of environments that students are given the best opportunity to succeed in life. Furthermore, when teachers and staff involve themselves in a helpful, open, and constructive atmosphere, all individuals are likely to feel a sense of accomplishment and value.

**Love/Relationship.** Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) stated, “For a successful solution of the problem of love and marriage, an occupation contributing to the division of labor is necessary, as well as a good and friendly contact with other human beings” (p. 132). This is why providing and creating a positive school culture is of upmost importance. A positive school culture offers a welcoming community, an opportunity to develop new abilities to better society in the future, and the privilege to establish healthy and supportive relationships. The strategies stated earlier, Restorative Justice, Responsive Classroom, and SWPBS, are all crucial methods when working to help children and adults achieve the three life tasks. Forming positive relationships, learning to love and accept one another, and the use of encouragement, are effective ways teachers and staff in schools can use to resolve the love/relationship life task. When school leaders are determined to create or maintain a positive school culture, he or she is also indirectly and directly working to support and solve the three life tasks.

**Sense of significance, belonging, and safety.** Likewise, schools have the important task of providing an environment that promotes a sense of significance, belonging, and safety for all students. The three life tasks relate directly to these feelings. The occupation life tasks relates
directly to fulfilling a sense of significance. The community life task relates directly with providing a sense of belonging. The love/relationship life task relates directly with supplying a sense of safety. “Feeling safe – socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically- is a fundamental human need” (Cobb, 2014, p. 14). Similarly, Alfred Adler believed that in order to live a successful, productive, and healthy life, all individuals must feel a sense of significance, belonging, and safety (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

**The Crucial “C’s”**

School environments have a lot of responsibility. Not only does the school help in accomplishing the three life tasks and developing social interest within a student, but the school must also construct an environment that will help students feel connected, capable, as if he or she counts, and must foster a sense of courage. Battistich (2001), while studying the effects of the Child Development Project in an elementary school, found that when students feel more “connected” to school, he or she “liked school more, worked harder, was more engaged in school, had greater trust in and respect for teachers, and had higher educational aspirations” (p. 6). Teachers who use the techniques mentioned earlier of a responsive classroom are likely to be successful in assisting students in accomplishing the “crucial C’s.” Teachers who use encouragement with the students help the students to feel capable to complete the tasks assigned. “Encouragement is a key component in helping students feel more capable, connected to the group, and able to contribute in positive ways” (Brigman, Villares, & Webb, 2011, p. 409). Teachers who “share the responsibility of learning with their students” (Soheili et al., 2015, p. 452), are more likely to build the courage within the students (Soheili et al., 2015, p. 452). Teachers who are supportive and advocate for the students are more likely to have a student feel connected and as if he or she counts. Soheili et al. explain, “by using techniques such as
encouragement, logical consequences, and mutual respect, teachers can create a safe and respectful environment in which students experience lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of safety, enjoyment, and belonging” (p. 452). Students learn directly from the teacher, who acts as a model for how human beings should interact, cooperate, and respect one another (Soheili et al., 2015, p. 452). Positive school cultures that use strategies such as the Responsive Classroom will make the “crucial C’s” much more attainable for students.

**Social Interest**

As one can recognize, the three life tasks all require a degree of social interest. Social interest “represents the intellectual, affective and behavioral aspects of the optimal relationship to others; namely, understanding, empathizing with, and acting on behalf of others that prompts action toward others in a useful way” (Knutson, Miranda, & Washell, 2005, p. 26). Likewise, Alfred Adler believed that human beings must be social interested in order to live a healthy and productive life. Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) state that Alfred Adler believed, “like other psychological processes or traits, social interest is a part of the individual’s equipment” (p.133). The authors further go on to say, “the high degree of cooperation and social culture which man needs for his very existence demands spontaneous social effort, and the dominant purpose of education is to evoke it” (p. 134). When looking at social interest and its’ relationship to school culture, Restorative Justice practices are an effective way to promote social interest and social responsibility within schools. As mentioned in the above paragraphs, school cultures that are using restorative practices are promoting social relationships by “creating contexts for learning in which the voice of the other may be heard, and where dialogue and reflective enquiry prompt learning that is inclusive and socially informed” (Macready, 2009, p. 218). This type of practice within schools supplies opportunities for students to learn about his or her peer’s views and
priorities and helps students understand socially responsible actions and responses while creating a “relationship culture where individuals are respected and well integrated into a social network” (Macready, 2009, p. 212).

Social interest is not a characteristic that individuals are born with, but rather a capability that needs to be developed over time (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 134). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1956) explain that, “social interest can come to life only in the social context” (p. 134). Therefore, the school environment is essential to a child’s development of social interest. The school must “create an environment in which everyone feels valued and respected; where there are firm and clear expectations, and where negatives responses to hurtful or harmful actions are combined with opportunities to re-integrate individual wrong-doers within a caring social network” (Macready, 2009, p. 212). Schools with positive leaders and a positive culture have the greatest potential of ensuring the development of social interest within every student, teacher, and staff member.

**Implications for School Counselors**

As mentioned above, school leaders play a critical role in creating and maintaining a positive school culture. Professional school counselors (PSC) are fundamental leaders within schools and typically serve as a liaison between administration, teachers, and other faculty. “School counselors are looked upon as student advocates, educational planners and reformers, team members and collaborators, as well as systems change agents” (Erford, 2004, p. 95). House (as cited in Erford, 2004, p. 201) stated that, “professional school counselors are the eyes and ears of the school.” School counselors have the unique opportunity to see and hear the issues and concerns of not only the students, but also the parents, faculty, administration, and the community (Erford, 2004, p. 120). School counselors, as well as administration, “are trained in
leadership and research skills” (Erford, 2004, p. 120), but what makes a school counselor unique is that he or she is the only one trained in “counseling, group facilitation, collaboration and consultation, and advocacy” (as cited in Erford, 2004, p. 120). Because of this, school counselors have the unparalleled position to “contribute significantly to the school’s mission of raising student achievement (Erford, 2004, p. 121).

Professional school counselors can play a fundamental role in creating or maintaining a positive school culture. As a leader, it is necessary that the school counselor advocates and collaborates for the students within the school environment, as well as the outside community. “Leadership involves mobilizing school personnel and clients to notice, face, and take on the tasks of changing instruction as well as harnessing and mobilizing the resources needed to support the transformation of teaching and learning” (Wingfield, Reese & West-Olatunji, 2010, p. 124). Turan and Bektas (2013) conducted a study to understand the relationship between school culture and leadership. There were five leadership practices that were measured, which include: guidance, creating a vision, questioning the process, encouraging the staff, and encouraging the audiences (p. 159). The results showed that the five leadership practices predicted 28% of the school culture, with the guidance practice being 21% of the school culture (Turan & Bektas, 2013, p. 162). This alone shows the significance of how positive leadership practices can impact the school culture.

Professional school counselors provide a variety of student-centered activities, as well as staff development opportunities. Individual counseling, small group counseling, and classroom guidance are three direct ways of providing counseling, which counselors can use to teach and incorporate aspects of a positive school culture as mentioned earlier (American School Counselor Association, 2012). Professional school counselors also have the unique opportunity
to provide professional development meetings and courses with the staff and administration. “These can be an opportunity to promote more effective learning climates, to mobilize resources within a school, to help bring a faculty together as a team, and to provide a foundation of skills for subsequent one-to-one consultations” (Carlson, Dinkmeyer, & Johnson, 2008, p. 483). These could be used for helping the faculty understand the importance and benefits of a positive school culture, as well as how a toxic school culture can incredibly hinder a student, staff, or teacher’s achievement. Additionally, these gatherings could be used to acquaint the staff and faculty about the school’s history, mission, values, traditions, and the other aspects that comprise a positive school culture (Carlson et al., 2008). Furthermore, professional school counselors have the favorable circumstances to cultivate or preserve a positive school culture.

**Conclusion**

The culture of a school is extremely challenging to alter because it is comprised of individual’s beliefs, values, stories, traditions, and the like. Certain aspects of a culture are disseminated over time, therefore causing only a couple of features to persevere over the years. Because of the unlikelihood of a culture changing, it is essential that school leaders understand the importance of a positive school culture and work hard at creating that culture if the culture is currently toxic. As a consequence of the many elements that construct a school culture, it is of utmost importance that the school leadership team accepts or alters the mission and vision statement of the school before any movement can occur.

Positive school cultures focus on collaboration, mutual respect, communication, kindness, and encouragement (Peterson & Deal, 2009b). Individuals who are involved in a supportive environment are much more likely to succeed because he or she is more likely to feel a sense of hopefulness and empowerment, rather than hopelessness and disappointment (Peterson
The school environment may be the only setting that a student, or even a staff, feels welcomed and recognized. Differently, a toxic school culture focuses on failures, discouragement, and the weaknesses of individuals. Individuals involved in a toxic culture are not interested in changing, legitimize negative behaviors, and only look out for himself. Consequently, achieving a positive school culture is crucial to ensure students and staff will be prepared to live a productive and successful life.

Before motioning to adapt the school culture, individuals must assess the current school culture. Using Gruenert and Valentine’s 2006 Culture Typology Activity and The School Culture Survey, school leaders and staff will be more competent in understanding what the school culture is needing. The Culture Typology Activity looks at twelve key aspects that make up a culture and six types of school cultures (Gruenert & Whitaker, 2015, p. 67). Hopefully, all teachers would be expected to fill out the activity and survey in order to ensure the most accurate results. Ideally, school leaders would like to see the highest numbers in the columns of a Comfortable Collaborative Culture or a Collaborative Culture. By completing these activities, school leaders would have a more extensive understanding of the current school culture and therefore can decide what would be best for the school.

School leadership is key in promoting and developing a positive school culture. Strengths-based leadership, transformational leadership, and appreciative leadership are three types of successful leadership. Strengths-based leadership focuses on understanding and utilizing the unique strengths of individuals and helps other team members uncover his or her unique strengths (Rath & Conchie, 2008, p. 16). Transformational leadership relates closely to strengths-based leadership as it concentrates on recognizing the skills and abilities that individuals have, but engaging the whole person, rather than just using his or her strengths.
Appreciative leadership spotlights on changing the way people think rather than what people do and aims at fulfilling trust, compassion, stability, and hope in all the team members (Orr & Cleveland-Innes, 2015, p. 237). If a school leadership team has these types of leaders, the probability of being able to change a school culture into a positive culture is quite high.

Although having a strong leadership team is a key aspect in creating a positive school culture, there are a variety of strategies and interventions that would be beneficial in helping the process. School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SWPBS), Restorative Justice, and The Responsive Classroom are three well-researched interventions that have been found in creating a positive atmosphere within the school environment. These interventions focus on teaching individuals mutual respect, collaboration, encouragement, positive behaviors, consistency, communication, and respectful relationships. These interventions have been successful at improving teachers’ and students’ relational skills, academic and social outcomes, problem-solving skills, and increasing pleasure and enjoyment in school (Baroody et al., 2014, p. 70). By teaching students these practices and teachers representing these practices, individuals will hopefully develop a sense of belonging and significance and will build kindness, honesty, and empowerment within the students.

Students are spending more time at school than he or she spends at home. Therefore, schools have a large impact on the skills and attitudes students have. Alfred Adler believed every individual needed to fulfill three basic life tasks in order to live a healthy and productive life. These tasks are occupation, love/relationship, and community. In addition, Adler believed all human beings must feel a sense of significance, belonging, and safety. When individuals fulfill the three life tasks, he or she is also accomplishing the feeling of significance, belonging,
and safety. During the time that children are attending school, school is his or her occupation and helping him or her feel a sense of significance. Likewise, a positive school culture focuses on creating a welcoming and warm community where all students and staff feel supported, as well as feeling as if he or she belongs. Additionally, using the Responsive Classroom technique in a positive school culture is an excellent way to ensure students are accomplishing their love/relationship task and sense of safety. Teachers provide a supportive, encouraging, and respectful environment for students to be a part of and in return, students understand how to form positive, loving relationships later in life.

In conclusion, school counselors play an essential role in creating a positive school culture. School counselors collaborate and communicate not only with students, but administration, teachers, parents, stakeholders, and the outside community. This gives counselors the opportunity to hear the issues and needs within the school, as well as outside of the school. School counselors have the incredible opportunity to meet with teachers and staff to inform them of the importance of creating a positive school culture and teach the team how to be most successful in creating this culture. The most significant goals of a school counselor are to advocate for every student within the school and ensure that he or she is giving every student the opportunity and best circumstances to live up to his or her potential. Establishing a positive school culture is the most powerful way a school counselor could guarantee that he or she is, to the best of his or her ability, providing an atmosphere where a student has the opportunity to live a successful and productive life.
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