

Confidential School Climate Survey: Identify and Assist Counselors with Treating Social-Emotional At-Risk Students

by

Alvin F. Larson, Ph.D.
Meriden Public Schools
Meriden, Connecticut

Abstract

Typical School Climate surveys are anonymous, so if a specific student not currently in counseling is in a social-emotional crisis, an anonymous survey provides little assistance. This confidential online survey for students in grades 3-12 has been independently validated and was primarily designed to produce actionable data for school counselors. Two of the climate questions ask about threats/harassment or mean rumor. Depending on a student's response, "trigger emails" are immediately sent to counselors and administrators. Some professional staff have been surprised by which students have reported emotional harassment or social isolation. This paper examines the utility of this new tool including its longitudinal data system and estimates the proportion of latent, social-emotional at-risk students that remain unidentified.

Objective

This paper examines a new tool designed to help identify students in social-emotional crisis as well as providing each student's perceptions that may assist school psychologists in treating their current caseload of students. The Meriden School District's School Climate Survey – Student Version (MSCS-SV) is designed primarily for school psychologists. There are hundreds of school climate surveys claiming to measure "climate" (Cohen, *et al* 2009), but they are almost all anonymous and unable to provide information about specific students. The MSCS-SV is an online *confidential* climate survey; each item is on a 5-point Likert scale. The MSCS-SV also maintains the survey's historical data which provide counselors with the ability to track climate perceptions over a period of time for each student.

Besides confidentiality (non-anonymous), another innovative feature of the MSCS-SV is the use of "trigger emails" which are associated with two of the survey items: "I get hit or threatened by other students" and "Other students at school have spread mean rumors or lies about me". If a student selects "very often" or "always" on either of these items, he/she is provided the opportunity to "tell us

about it" in a text box. The customized software immediately sends an email to the school psychologist, social worker and administrators of the school as well as the Office of Research and Evaluation. The trigger emails allow professional staff to immediately react to students who may be in an emotional crisis and to provide insight into that student's perception of their social-emotional environment. The purpose of the climate survey is to provide school counselors with (1) a timely response system to identify students who perceive they are experiencing a social-emotional problem; (2) new insights of any student's perceptions especially those students receiving counseling services, and lastly (3) measures of "school climate" to meet state legislative requirements. Another objective of this paper is to estimate the proportion of latent, social-emotional at-risk students that remain unidentified.

Perspectives and Theoretical Framework

Positive school climate have been associated with academic success, as well as bullying and other problem behaviors (McEvoy & Welker, 2000; Cohen, et al 2009). Some forms of bullying behavior, such as relationship aggression and friendship manipulation have also been associated with depression and suicidal ideation (Raskauskas, J., & Stoltz, A.D., 2004; Lyznicki, 2004). To address problem behaviors and school bullying activity, whole school character and pro-social behavior programs are traditionally recommended. These whole-school programs encourage children to 'tell an adult' but most students do not (Bauman, 2010; American Educational Research Association, 2013; Orpinas and Horne, 2006; Williams and Cornell, 2006). As a result, it is hypothesized that some children who are unable to develop adequate relationship and coping skills (Bostich, 2011; Farah and Cornell, 2006; Klein, et. al., 2012; Visconti, et. al., 2013) continue to suffer silently, hidden from view (Kuperminc, et al 2010). To help find these unidentified children, some researchers have recommended the development of more "developmentally sensitive methods" to reporting perceived bullying behavior (Bostic, J.Q., & Burnt, C.C., 2011; Lyznicki, J.M., McCaffree, M.A., & Robinowitz, C.B., 2004). The online MSCS-SV is perceived as developmentally sensitive because the student is not telling an adult face to face, but through the computer, which is less intimidating to students.

There are non-anonymous instruments, such as The School Climate Survey (Chen, 2002) but this instrument was intended for research, not for public use because of possible ethical issues. Confidentiality is a concern with MSCS-SV, but this issue is addressed by the American Psychological Association Ethical Standards 3.10 and 9.03: except when "testing is conducted as a routine educational activity." The MSCS-SV was developed to address the state requirement of using a

climate survey and to address bullying in schools. Before taking the MSCS-SV, students are instructed that the survey is confidential: "We cannot share the student's responses unless there is a safety issue"; a student reporting to be harassed/threatened/mean rumors "very often" or "always" are seen as a safety issue.

Methods

Since much of this research deals with counselor perceptions, this study will be primarily qualitative and descriptive. In this school district, school psychologists, social workers, some guidance counselors and non-profit health clinics provide social-emotional counseling services. These service providers were surveyed to determine their perception and effectiveness of "trigger emails" and use of the individual student's current responses from the MSCS-SV as well as the student level MSCS-SV historical data. In order to identify students who were not receiving any counseling services and were latently at-risk, all counseling staff were asked to report the students they were serving in group or individual counseling during the 2012-2013 school year. These data were merged with the MSCS-SV data to determine which students may be latently at-risk but not receiving counseling services.

Data Sources

The Meriden Public Schools, Meriden, Connecticut is comprised of eight elementary schools, two middle schools and two high schools, with a total enrollment of ~8,900 students. The district serves a diverse student population, with 70.0% receiving free or reduced lunch, 11.5% not fluent in English, with 30.4% of the district's students coming from homes where English is not the primary language, and 13.4% receiving special education services. Total minority population was 65.3%, including 47.9% Hispanic, 13.9% African-American, 3.1% Asian, and 0.4% Native American.

The MSCS-SV is online and takes about 15 minutes for students to complete. The primary data sources will be item and factor-based scale scores. Since this is an online survey, each student's personal identification number is known and can be merged with demographic data, as well as academic, attendance and behavioral data. Approximately 4,500 students in grades 3 to 12 complete the MSCS-SV each Fall/Spring, a 76% completion rate.

The MSCS-SV was designed based on the National School Climate Standards (2009) and piloted in June 2011. Based on these pilot data, the survey was revised. This revised survey was re-administered in the fall of 2011 and the spring of 2012. The administration schedule was repeated in the 2012-2013

school year and will be repeated in the 2013-2014 school year. The MSCS-SV has seven scales. These scales were locally determined through two exploratory factor analyses. These factors were verified with confirmatory factor analysis by an independent researcher at a state university with a comparative fit index (CFI) of $>.90$ (Gage, 2013). The seven factors with reliabilities are listed in Appendix A; the complete student survey is listed in Appendix B.

Rather than z-scores, each of the seven factor-based scores was forced to have meaningful upper and lower limits that conform to the 1 to 5 Likert scale (de Vans, 2002). To be meaningful to administrators and school counselors, all factor-based scores for each student and aggregated scores range from 1.00 to 5.00. Negative stem items were reverse coded to conform to 1.00 meaning the lowest climate score to 5.00 meaning the highest, most positive, school climate score.

The qualitative data from counselors concerning the utility of responses to trigger emails and historical survey data has been examined. Some of the typical student responses associated with trigger emails are listed in Appendix C. The general themes are: “I don’t know what to do ... hurt myself ... no friends ... help me”.

Results

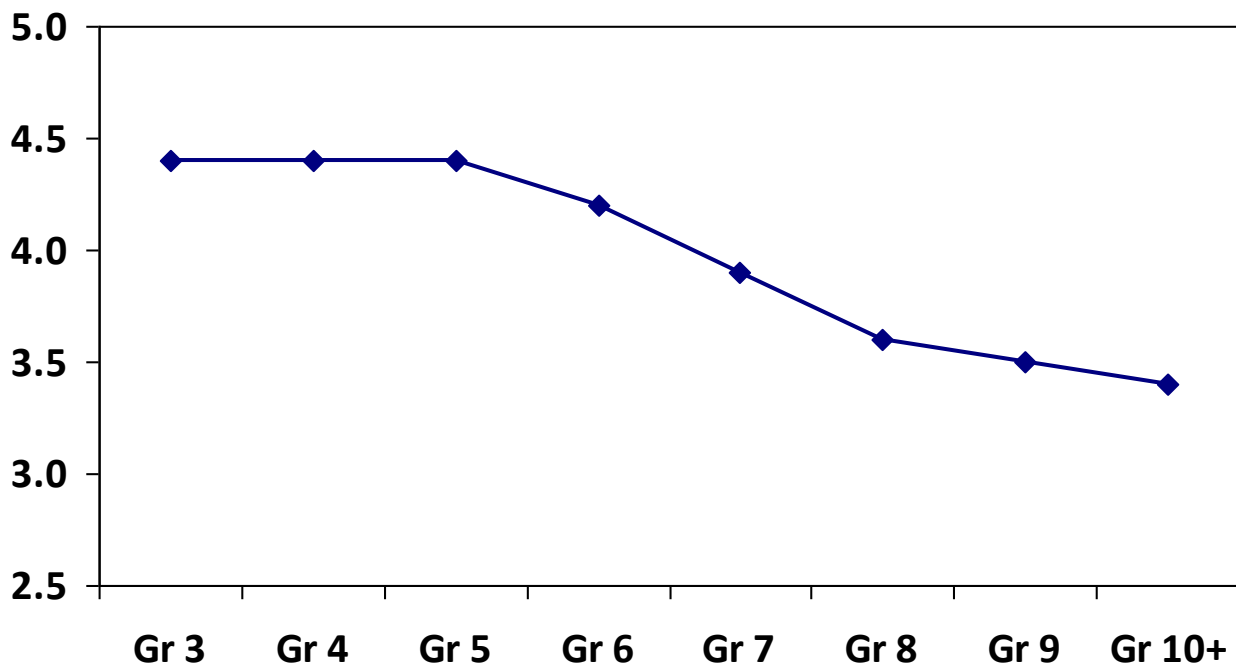
Results are divided into four sections: cross-sectional non-matched scores at one point in time; matched scores following student cohorts over time; individual student social-emotional profiles displayed by customized software within the longitudinal data system; and identification of the latent at-risk students.

Non-Matched Factor Base Scores

Figure 1 displays non-matched aggregated factor-based scores by grade level for Teachers Motivate and Care. These MSCS-SV data are typical of previous research, as Kuperminc and others have reported that perceived school climate decreases especially during the middle school grades.

FIGURE 1
Cross-Sectional Non-Matched Average Factor 1 Scores: Teachers Motivate and Care by Grade Level

**Most positive
perceived climate**

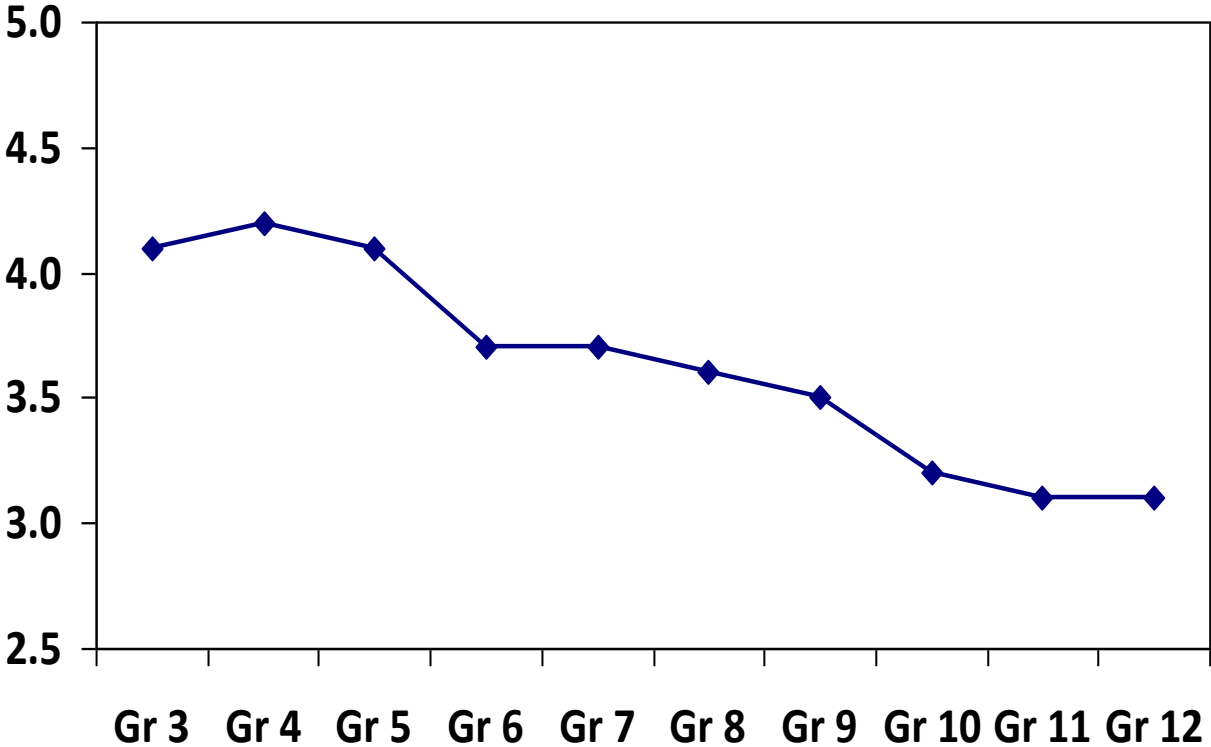


**Lowest perceived
climate**

Figure 2 displays non-matched aggregated factor-based scores by grade level for Respect Differences. This factor also decreases on average as grade level increases, indicating a less positive school climate for this factor. Respect Differences is comprised of items dealing with "skin color can cause problems", harassment and fighting is a problem and "respecting differences in other students".

FIGURE 2
Cross-Sectional Non-Matched Average Factor 3 Scores: Respect Differences by Grade Level

Most positive perceived climate

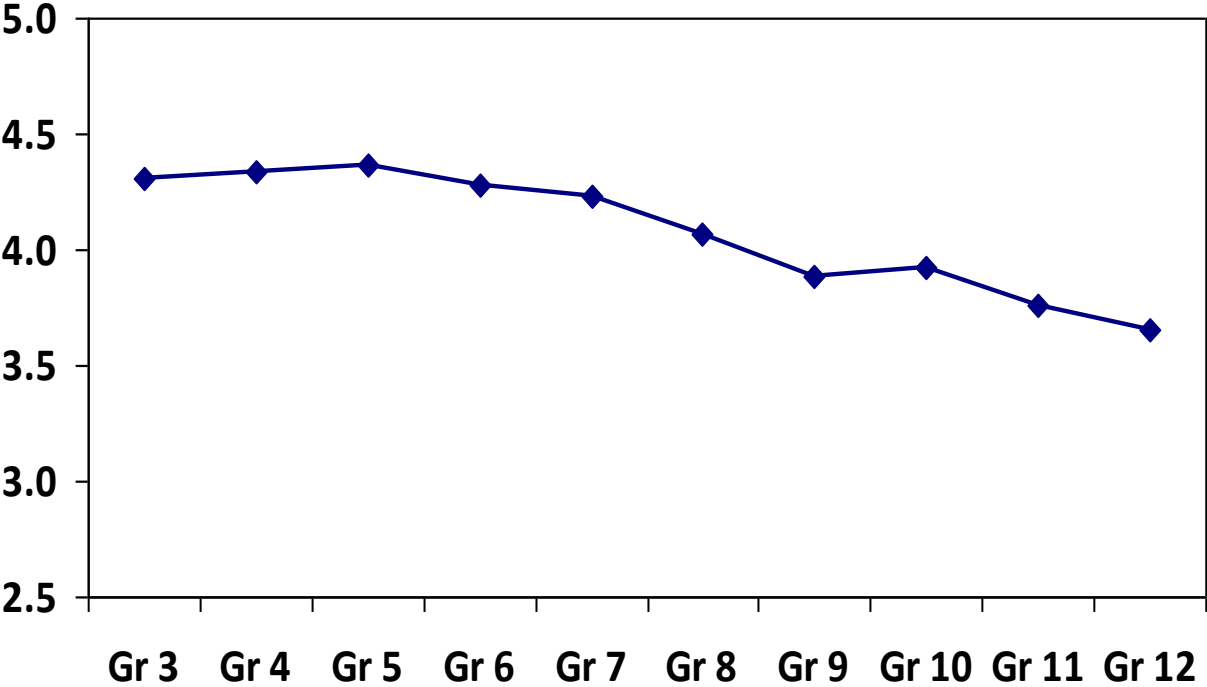


Lowest perceived climate

Figure 3 displays non-matched aggregated factor-based scores by grade level for Parental Support. These scores, representing the student's perception of parental support such as a place, time and help with homework, decrease less than Teachers Care and Respect Differences. However, this may also be seen as students becoming more independent and parents less able to "help with homework".

FIGURE 3
Cross-Sectional Non-Matched Average Factor 5 Scores: Perceived Parental Support by Grade Level

**Most positive
perceived climate**



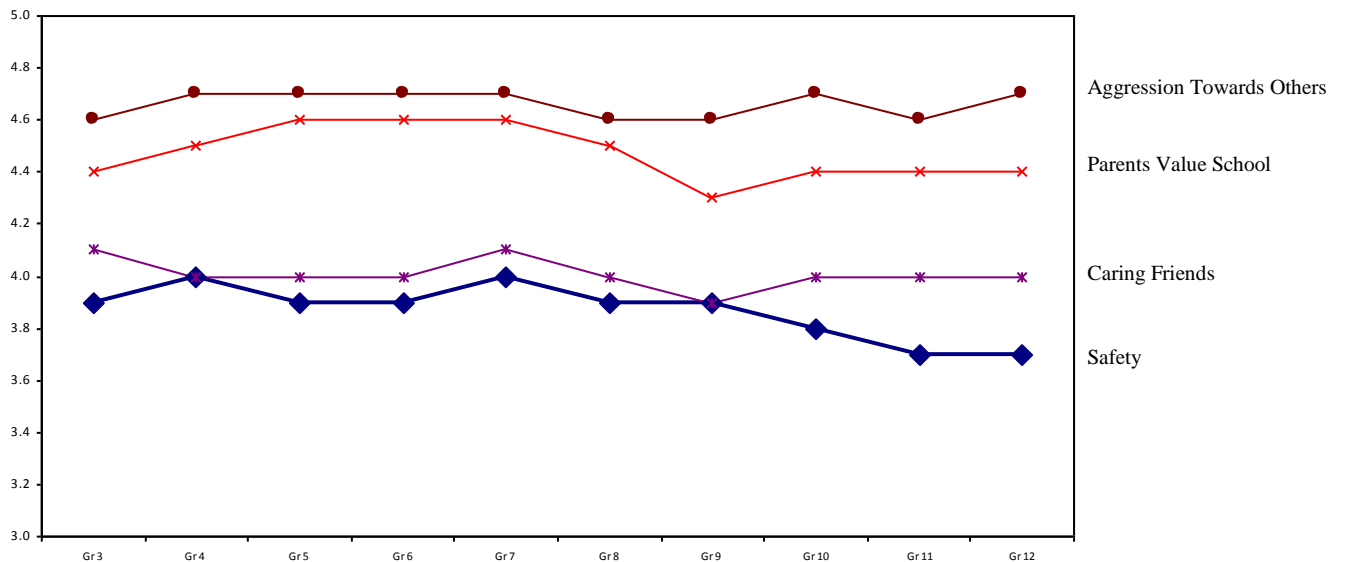
**Lowest perceived
climate**

The average factor-based scores for Teachers Care and Motivate, Respect Differences and Parental Support, substantially decrease across grade levels, especially during middle school. So a "low" factor-based score on these factors may not be "low" at higher grade levels.

The other four factor-based scores are highly skewed but stable across grade levels. The non-matched average factor-based scores by grade level are displayed in Figure 4. These remaining four factors measure student aggressive behaviors, the perception of parents valuing school, having caring friends and a student's perception of physical and emotional safety.

FIGURE 4
Cross-Sectional Non-Matched Average Scores of Stable Factors across grade levels:
Safety, Aggression, Friendship and Parent’s Value School
by Grade Level

**Most positive
perceived climate**



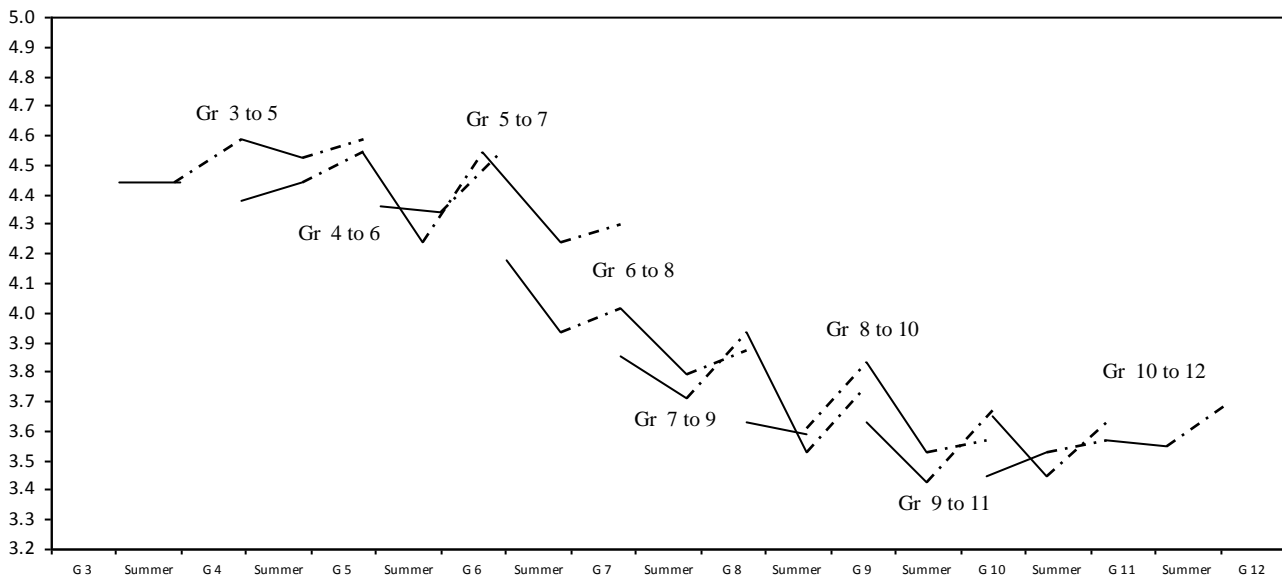
**Lowest perceived
climate**

One of the social-emotional "at-risk" indicators is those students' who are two standard deviations or more below the grade-level mean. This judgmentally determined at-risk cut score (-2σ) for all factors will be reviewed and adjusted as needed based on feedback from school psychologists and social workers. The customized school climate software is being revised to identify these potentially at-risk students.

Matched Factor-Based Scores Over Time

Since MSCS-SV is a non-anonymous survey, individual and groups of matched students can be tracked over time. Figure 5 displays matched scores of eight cohorts of students (grade 3 to 5, grade 4 to 6, grade 5 to 7, grade 6 to 8, grade 7 to 9, grade 8 to 10, grade 9 to 11 and grade 10 to 12) on the Teachers Care and Motivate factor. Students from each of these cohorts completed five climate surveys from September 2011 through September 2013. These matched scores follow the same students over time.

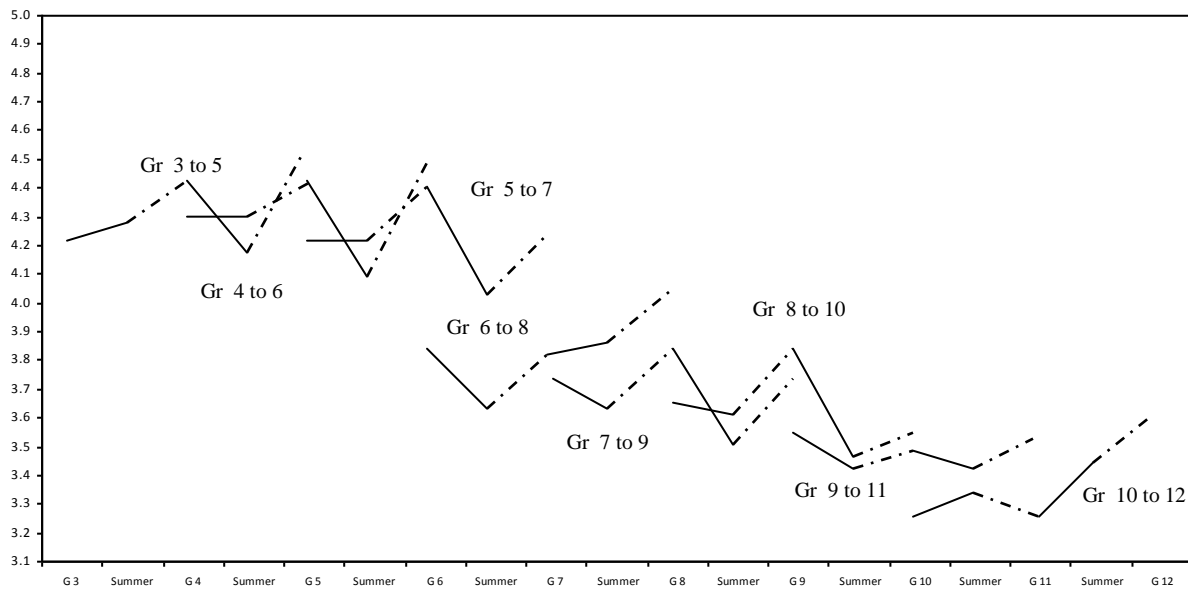
FIGURE 5
Matched Factor-Based Scores for Teachers Care and Motivate from September 2011 through September 2013: Eight Grade-Level Cohorts



One interesting pattern in Figure 5 is the seasonal fluctuations in Teachers Care and Motivate; these fluctuations are generally decreasing during the school year (solid lines) but always increasing over the summer and the start of each school year (dotted line). Perhaps this is a sense of optimism that this year's teachers will be more caring at the start of each school year. The two youngest cohorts (grade 3 to 5 and grade 4 to 6) and the two oldest cohorts (grade 9 to 11 and 10 to 12) are increasing in the perception that teachers care and motivate. The middle school cohorts still show seasonal fluctuations but overall decreasing perceptions that teachers care and motivate them to learn.

Figure 6 displays matched scores of the same eight cohorts on the Respect Differences factor which demonstrate a similar pattern to Teachers Care and Motivate. The higher the average factor-based score the more positive climate, indicating students are more accepting of the differences of others. This school district does implement character building/positive behavior programs, perhaps the Respect Differences factor may be able to serve as an evaluation measure of the success of these positive behavior programs.

FIGURE 6
Matched Factor-Based Scores for Respect Differences
from September 2011 through September 2013: Eight Grade-Level Cohorts



All of the eight cohorts demonstrate seasonal variation in Respect Differences. However, only one cohort (grade 8 to 10) showed a decrease in Respect Differences from September 2011 to September 2013. Three of the cohorts (grade 5 to 7, grade 7 to 9, and grade 9 to 11) remained the same during this time period. The other four cohorts (grade 3 to 5, grade 4 to 6, grade 6 to 8, and grade 10 to 12) showed average increases, meaning greater acceptance of differences in others.

Individual Student Profiles

The combination of trigger email text, "low" factor-based scores and changes in scores over time can begin to provide a meaningful student profile for counselors. Figure 7 displays matched scores for "Kara", a grade 7 student, who has both "low" factor-based scores and "large" decreases on some factors. Part of this current research is to begin to determine how "low" scores and "changes" in scores might constitute a social-emotional at-risk indicator. Kara has lost friends and no longer feels teachers care about her (3.08 to 1.36). She also feels other students are very mean to her (1.00 on Factor 2: Safety).

FIGURE 7

Social-Emotional Profile: Kara (Grade 8)

Factor Names and Factor-Based Scores							
Climate Survey Date	(1) Teachers Motivate and Care	(2) Safety	(3) Respect Differences	(4) Parents Value School	(5) Parental Support	(6) Friends	(7) Aggression Towards Others
Avg Factor Scores	SF1	SF2	SF3	SF4	SF5	SF6	SF7
Student Survey Fall 2013	1.36	1.00	1.50	3.25	2.75	1.00	4.33
Student Survey Spring 2013	3.00	1.40	1.00	2.25	1.00	4.40	5.00
Student Survey Fall 2012	2.55	2.71	1.83	4.00	4.75	2.33	5.00
Student Survey Spring 2012	3.08	3.57	3.33	1.60	1.50	3.12	3.33

Partial Diagnosis:

Factor 1 (SF1) Teachers Motivate and Care was very low in fall 2013 (1.36), much lower than previous surveys, so Kara thinks teachers no longer care about her.

Factor 2 (SF2) Safety has decreased since spring 2012 (3.57) to the lowest score of (1.00) in fall 2013. Kara feels threatened by other students, who spread mean rumors about her; she does not feel safe and is sad in school.

Factor 6 (SF6) Friends Kara also feels she has lost friends since spring 2013 (4.40) to the lowest possible score in fall 2013 (1.00)

Student perception of caring adults, respect, friendship, parental support, safety, and aggression are associated with disengagement from school (National School Climate Standards, 2009). These data could enhance interventions that may prevent future and more severe problem behaviors for both latently at-risk students and a counselor's current caseload of students.

Kara's responses would have also generated two trigger emails to the school psychologist and social workers; one for "safety" and a second email for "no friends". At the request of counselors and school administrators, another automated email was added when a student indicates they do not have friends. Both school-based counselors and administrators felt this would be "relatively easy" to address: help develop new friends. Kara would also be added to individual or group counseling to help her address her coping skills (Visconti, et al. 2013). For Kara and other students, these historical responses to specific items/factors have been reported to be "very useful" to counselors.

The MSCS-SV historical data for each student is maintained and provided to school counselors. The refinement of at-risk student profiles is continuing through the 2013-2014 school year based on input from school psychologists and social workers.

A group of school psychologists and social workers also formed a working group to develop a protocol for reacting to student trigger emails. The draft protocol indicates the minimum response time after receiving these student trigger emails should range from immediate to 24 hours depending on the trigger email. A form to gather minimal information, record the discussions, recommend response/solution and periodic interviews throughout the school year as needed was also suggested. Any serious issues of bullying are reported to administration.

Identification of Latent At-Risk Students

From the Fall 2012 MSCS-SV, about 7.0% of students say they are threatened or mean rumors are spread about them "very often" or "always"; this percentage increases to 10% in Spring MSCS-SV administration. The identification of latent, social-emotionally at-risk students depends upon the responses each student makes to the MSCS-SV. These responses may result in trigger-emails, "low" or "large" changes in factor-based scores. Some of these students do not show overt signs of distress (at least not yet) but they are under severe social-emotional stress. School psychologists, counselors and administrators were sometimes surprised by some of the students who were reporting social-

emotional at-risk anxieties. The general themes are: "Some of the student names presented were not names that I knew... one child that seemed happy ... resulted in intervention ... the trigger system was the only way we learned the problem existed ... it can help prevent conflict ... provide opportunities for mediation, and alert us that a student is in need ... one student ... did not feel comfortable talking to someone directly ... didn't want to be ... labeled a snitch ... (the) history of (student) responses on questions is helpful when starting to work with students ... I do worry that some quiet students may slip through the cracks."

Quantitatively, about 12.4% of students completing the climate survey have been tentatively identified by "low" factor-based scores ($>2.0 \sigma$ below mean). Excluding those students already in group or individual counseling, there were 10% (442 of 4,413) who are possibly at-risk and unidentified based on these "low" factor-based scores. The two trigger email items concerning being hit/threatened and being the subject of mean rumors/lies self-identified 5.6% of students (N=247) across grades 3-12. Only 59 of these self-identified students were in counseling during the 2012-2013 school year. This means 4.3% of the total surveyed population (n=188) remains hidden and not serviced by counselors. These preliminary qualitative and quantitative results indicate there are 4.3% to 10% of students who were not in any counseling and remain latently at-risk and are in need of social-emotional support.

Significance of the Work

Non pro-social attitudes and low school climate scores are associated with lower academic achievement, current problem behaviors, as well as future problem and criminal behaviors. The traditional selection methods for social-emotional counseling and bullying rely on student face-to-face self-reports, teacher referrals and parent recommendations. There are strong indications that some students remain latently social-emotional at-risk without counseling support. Traditional identification methods are not comprehensive and school districts need additional methods that are more developmentally sensitive and responsive. The MSCS-SV is a developmentally sensitive tool and has also demonstrated a variety of significant contributions.

One very important result of this confidential climate survey occurred during the pilot development in June 2011. A troubled middle school student completed the online survey that caused the survey software to send the following email (see Case #1 Appendix C).

Case 1

there are some people who call me names and ... people start rumors about me that i dont like sometimes i want to die and kill myself before the next day. i feel like everyone hates me and for no reason. ive sometimes been nice but when they bring up the rumor i say really bad things to keep them away ... one day i was thrown a note saying im ###. and it was my by bestfriend ... i lost the only thing that i can trust. i was alone for a long time. if this is un healthy then please help me ...

This student, who was in danger of doing harm, was in counseling within 30 minutes of receiving this trigger email; this actionable data may have saved harm to or death of a student - making this new tool worth the effort and a significant result for this individual situation alone.

Many other students have also benefited: between 4.3 to 10% of the student population perceive themselves as socially-emotionally at-risk and have successfully self identified themselves as in need of some form of social-emotional support from a caring adult.

Students with high levels of aggression (-2σ on Aggression Toward Others) are also associated with low problem solving skills (Williams and Cornwell, 2006); their primary coping skill is aggression and, just like their victims (Case #1) are also in need of counseling interventions and have been identified.

The MSCS-SV customized software and historical data has also developed a social-emotional profile based on the MSCS-SV factor-based scores. These have been reported by counselors as "very helpful" in the counseling of these self-identified students as well as their current caseload of students.

The matched MSCS-SV data also demonstrates that some aspects of perceived "school climate" have seasonal variations; most positive at the beginning of the school year and least positive at the end of the school year for most grade levels.

The MSCS-SV promises to be an effective new tool to identify and help treat both currently identified students as well as those social-emotional at-risk students who are without counseling services. It is possible that prompt staff responses to the MSCS-SV actionable data over time have helped to diminish the severity of student social-emotional crises over these past two school years. The MSCS-SV is seen as a new tool for school counselors and a behavioral screen to future, preventable problem behaviors such as bullying (Gage, 2014) and other possibly criminal or violent events. Future research should determine if these results are transferable to other local education agencies. Except for technical fees to integrate with a student information system, the MSCS-SV is in the public domain and is free to other school districts.

REFERENCES

- American Educational Research Association. (2013). *Prevention of bullying in schools, colleges, and universities: Research report and recommendations*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association, 10, 60.
- Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct*, (2010). American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/ethics>
- Bauman, S., (2010). *Cyberbullying in a Rural Intermediate School: an Exploratory Study*. The Journal of Early Adolescence, 30(6): 803-833.
- Bostic, J. Q., & Burnt, C. C., (2011). *Cornered: An Approach to School Bullying and Cyberbullying, and Forensic Implications*. Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America, 20 (3), 447-465.
- Chan, H. F. John (2002). 'The School Life Survey – A New Instrument for Measuring Bullying and Victimization, unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hull, UK.
- Cohen, Jonathan, McCabe, Elizabeth M., Michelli, Nicholas M., and Pickeral, Terry (2009). *School Climate: Research, Policy, and Teacher Education*. Teachers College Record Volume 111, Number 1, January, 183, 196.
- de Vaus, D. A., (2002). *Surveys in Social Research*, 5th Edition. Routledge, 11 New Fetter Lane, London. 193-194.
- Gage, N. A., Larson, A., Chafouleas, S. (2013). The Meriden School Climate Survey-Student Version: Reliability and Validity. Unpublished report University of Connecticut, Department of Educational Psychology.
- Gage, N. A., Prykanowski, D., Larson, A. (2014). *School Climate and Bullying Victimization: A Latent Class Growth Model Analysis*. In press, School Psychology Quarterly.
- Jennings, P. A., Frank, J. L., Snowberg, K. E., Coccia, M. A., and Greenberg, M. T. (2013). *Improving Classroom Learning Environments by cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE): Results of a Randomized Control Trial*. School Psychology Quarterly 28 (4) 374-390.
- Jones, S. M., Bouffard, S. M., and Weissbound, R. (2013). *Educators' Social and Emotional Skills Vital to Learning*. Phi Delta Kappan, May 94 (8): 62-65.
- Klein, J., Cornell, D., and Konald, T. (2012). *Relationships Between Bullying, School Climate and Student Risk Behaviors*. School Psychology Quarterly, 27(3): 154-169.
- Kuperminc, Gabriel P., Leadbeater, Bonnie J., Emmons, Christine, and Blatt, Sidney B. (1997). *Perceived School Climate and Difficulties in the Social Adjustment of Middle School Students*. Applied Developmental Science, 1:2, 76-88. Published online: 04 Jun 2010. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s1532480xads0102_2

Lyznicki, J. M., McCaffree, M. A., & Robinowitz, C. B., (2004). *Childhood Bullying: Implications for Physicians*. American Family Physician, Nov 1; 70 (9): 1723-1728.

McEvoy, Alan, & Welker, Robert (2000). *Antisocial Behavior, Academic Failure, and School Climate: A Critical Review*. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. Hammill Institute on Disabilities and Sage online: 01 Jan 2000. <http://ebx.sagepub.com/content/8/3/130>.

National School Climate Standards (2009). National School Climate Council, Center for Social and Emotional Education. 545 8th Avenue, Rm 930, New York, NY. www.schoolclimate.org

Orpinas, P., Horne, A. M. (2006). *Bullying Prevention*. American Psychological Association. Washington D. C.

Raskauskas, J., & Stoltz, A.D., (2004). *Identifying and Intervening in Relational Aggression*. The Journal of School Nursing, Aug; 20 (4): 209-215.

Visconti, K. J., Sechler, C. M., and Kochenderfer-Ladd, B. (2013). *Coping with Peer Victimization: The Role of Children's Attributions*. School Psychology Quarterly, 28 (2): 122-140.

Williams, F., Cornell, D. (2006). *Student willingness to seek help for threats of violence*. Journal of School Violence, 5, 35-39.

Appendix A

Meriden's School Climate Survey for Students

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor Name; and alpha reliability (7 factors comprised of 38 items)

Factor 1: Teachers Motivate and Care $r = .914$

- #30 There are teachers in my school that help me to really want to learn
- #25 The teachers in my school make learning fun
- #43 At my school, there is a teacher or other adult who listens to me when I have something to say
- #36 At my school, there is a teacher or other adult who tells me when I do a good job
- #37 The adults in my school treat all students fairly
- #40 The adults in my school treat students with respect
- #42 My school handles student behavior problems fairly
- #26 I am happy to be at this school
- #7 At my school, there is a teacher or other adult whom I can trust
- #3 There are teachers at my school who care about me
- #21 I try to do my best at school

Factor 2: Safety $r = .758$

- #33 Other students in my school hurt my feelings
- #24 I feel sad in school
- #35 Other students at school have spread mean rumors or lies about me (OE)
- #34 I get hit or threatened by other students (OE)
- #22 I worry about people being mean to me in school
- #2 I feel safe at school
- #23 I feel safe on my way to and from school

Factor 3: Respect Differences $r = .759$

- #45 A person's skin color can cause problems at my school
- #39 Students being mean to other students (harassment) is a problem in my school
- #32 There is physical fighting between students at my school
- #31 At school, the color of my skin can get me in trouble
- #10 Students in my school respect differences in other students (different ...)

Factor 4: Parent Values School $r = .746$

- #11 At home, I have a parent or other adult who cares about my school work
- #18 At home, I have a parent or other adult who always wants me to do my best
- #8 At home, I have a parent or other adult who expects me to follow school rules
- #12 In the future, I feel I will be successful in life

Factor 5: Parental Support $r = .721$

- #44 At home, if I need help with homework, a parent or adult will help me
- #47 At home, I have a parent or other adult who listens to me when I have something to say
- #38 At home, I have a quiet place to do my homework
- #41 At home, I have time to do my homework

Factor 6: Caring Friends $r = .749$

- #14 I have a friend about my own age that really cares about me
- #19 I have a friend about my own age who talks with me about my problems
- #5 At my school, I have a friend who I can really trust
- #9 When I have a problem, I find someone to talk with

Factor 7: Aggression towards Others $r = .72$

- #46 During the past few months, I have hit, pushed or spread mean rumors at the bus stop or on the bus
- #28 During the past few months, I have spread mean rumors or lies about other students
- #27 During the past few months, I have hit or pushed other students at school in anger

Appendix B

Meriden School Climate Survey for Students						
For the first part of the survey, please indicate your agreement or disagreement to each statement.						
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
1.	My teachers want me to work hard and do well.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	I feel safe at school.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	There are teachers at my school who care about me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I know the school rules.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	At my school, I have a friend who I can really trust.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	This school wants all students to do their very best.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	At my school, there is a teacher or other adult whom I can trust.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	At home, I have a parent or other adult who expects me to follow school rules.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	When I have a problem, I find someone to talk with.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Students in my school respect differences in other students (different skin color, where the student came from, what the student believes, or boy/girl).	1	2	3	4	5
11.	At home, I have a parent or other adult who cares about my school work.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	In the future, I feel I will be successful in life.	1	2	3	4	5

		Agreement				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
13.	At my school, there is a teacher or other adult who always wants me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	I have a friend about my own age that really cares about me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	I try to understand how other students feel.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	At home, I have a parent or other adult who talks with me about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Other students in this school are polite and listen to what I say.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	At home, I have a parent or other adult who always wants me to do my best.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	I have a friend about my own age who talks with me about my problems.	1	2	3	4	5
20.	In class, I try to understand other students who disagree with me.	1	2	3	4	5

For the second part of the survey, please indicate how often each statement occurs.						
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
21.	I try to do my best at school.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	I worry about people being mean to me in school.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	I feel safe on my way to and from school.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	I feel sad in school.	1	2	3	4	5
25.	The teachers in my school make learning fun.	1	2	3	4	5
26.	I am happy to be at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	During the past few months, I have hit or pushed other students at school in anger.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	During the past few months, I have spread mean rumors or lies about other students	1	2	3	4	5
29.	I do my homework on time.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	There are teachers in my school that help me to really want to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
31.	At school, the color of my skin can get me in trouble.	1	2	3	4	5
32.	There is physical fighting between students at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
33.	Other students at school hurt my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
34.	I get hurt or threatened by other students. ** (if 4-5 go to optional open-ended)	1	2	3	4	5
35.	Other students at school have spread mean rumors or lies about me. ** (if 4-5 go to optional open-ended)	1	2	3	4	5

		Time				
		Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very Often	Always
36.	At my school, there is a teacher or other adult who tells me when I do a good job.	1	2	3	4	5
37.	The adults in my school treat all students fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
38.	At home, I have a quiet place to do my homework.	1	2	3	4	5
39.	Students being mean to other students (harassment) is a problem in my school.	1	2	3	4	5
40.	The adults in my school treat students with respect.	1	2	3	4	5
41.	At home, I have time to do my homework.	1	2	3	4	5
42.	My school handles student behavior problems fairly.	1	2	3	4	5
43.	At my school, there is a teacher or other adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	1	2	3	4	5
44.	At home, if I need help with homework, a parent or adult will help me.	1	2	3	4	5
45.	A person's skin color can cause problems at my school.	1	2	3	4	5
46.	During the past few months, I have hit, pushed or said mean things to other students at the bus stop or on the bus.	1	2	3	4	5
47.	At home, I have a parent or other adult who listens to me when I have something to say.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C

The following student quotes are samples of student “trigger e-mails”. They deal with suicide, harm, threats, relational and racial issues. The underlined segments, added by the presenter, align with national qualitative research findings.

Case 1	
Hispanic, male, grade 7, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language exposed to Spanish but English Dominant, Basic Math, Basic Reading	there are some people who call me names and ... people start <u>rumors about me that i dont like</u> sometimes i want to <u>die and kill myself</u> before the next day. i feel like everyone hates me and for no reason. ive sometimes been nice but <u>when they bring up the rumor i say really bad things to keep them away</u> ... one day i was thrown a note saying im ###. and it was my by bestfriend ... <u>i lost the only thing that i can trust.</u> i was alone for a long time. if this is un healthy then <u>pleace help me</u> ...
Case 2	
White, male, grade 5, Pay Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Goal Math, Proficient Reading.	At school some people dont like me so they bully me and pick on me. I feel horrible and I feel like <u>I want to stay at home doing nothing than get bullied at school.</u>
Case 3	
Hispanic, male, grade 4, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Goal Math, Goal Reading	evrey day steve and his little bro <u>beats me up</u>
Case 4	
White, Female, grade 5, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Basic Math, Proficient Reading	some kids <u>threaten me</u> by telling me they will punch me if i dont give them my stuff
Case 5	
Hispanic, female, grade 8, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language exposed to Spanish but English Dominant, Basic Math, Basic Reading	they make <u>threats</u> about how there going to fight me after school then i always have to keep looking overmy shoulder. the <u>make fun of my red hair , and my race</u> also they say mean thing like they <u>spread rumer about me</u> that are not true and most of the kids belive that they are true and that make me mad <u>when i have no one to talk to</u> about the things happening to me
Case 6	

Hispanic, female, grade 7, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Below Basic Math, Below Basic Reading	in the past of the school year people were spreading <u>rumors about me</u> and like what do i do to them. like i be crying cause i changed and people are <u>talking behide my back</u> like why would they do that like <u>i really dont know what to do.</u> other kids in this school be saying really bad stuff and (i dont want to say it but really bad stuff.) <u>i dont kown what to do any motre.</u>
Case 7	
White, female, grade 5, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Advanced Math, Advanced Reading	Sometimes people in my class and out of my class spread <u>rumors</u> like I have head lice or they say mean things to me or write mean things about me. Once not to long ago some one wrote a very mean letter that had alot of bad words and nasty thing about me. <u>Allmost all the people who tease me are girls.I feel like I have no friends!</u>
Case 8	
White, female, grade 11, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Advanced Math, Goal Reading	People have spread lies about me sleeping around and being pregnant. People have <u>spread rumors that I slept with teachers to get good grades</u>
Case 9	
White, female, grade 9, Pay Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, unknown Math, Goal Reading (transferred from non-public)	There are many people who call me a fat whore that should go to hell and <u>the no bullying policy really needs to start working</u> because it is affecting my life
Case 10	
Hispanic, female, grade 9 (retained), Free Lunch, Special education, has ELL services, Language is Spanish, Below Basic Math, Basic Reading	they realy dont say anything but <u>they just say im ugly nd that im by-sexual</u> nd really its getting really annoying people are just roud and they dont have a life but just to talk to people and i trust this <u>school</u> nd i know this school can help me with <u>this situation</u>
Case 11	
White, male, grade 8, Free Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Proficient Math, Goal Reading	<u>i get pushed around because people think its funny.</u> also i get called the ginger alot because i have red hair, i have also been called gay for no reason
Case 12	
Black, female, grade 3, Pay Lunch, not special education, not ELL, Language is English, Goal Math, Goal Reading	The kids at school <u>hit me because of my skin color</u>