



# Using a wider lens to promote discussions on the Physical Environment and Social Connectedness of School Communities



# Using a Comprehensive School Health Approach, Educators...

collaborate in a  
*Social and Physical Environment*

are engaged with  
*Teaching and Learning*



(JCSH, 2008)

interact with different  
*Partnerships and Services*

are guided and supported by  
*School Policy*

## Positive Social Environment

The social environment of a school reflects the quality and character of school life (National School Climate Center, 2014).

It consists of norms, goals, values, teaching and learning practices, health and wellness, and organizational structures.

The social environment is shaped by the relationships between and among students, staff, parents and the community.

A positive school environment exists when all stakeholders feel welcome, connected, valued, safe and accepted.



# Student Clubs

# Activity Setting Theory

“To understand a particular community, it is necessary to know the characteristics of its activity setting...important characteristics of activity setting include **people, positions, the physical environment, time, funds and symbols.**

(O'Donnell, & Tharpe, 1990; Wilson & Morren 1990)



# Activity Setting Theory - Characteristics

- How **funding** is allocated assigns status in a school community
- What is **timetabled** is valued (Health, CALM, DPA, etc)
- What or who is **valuable** in your school? (People, PD, Resources)
- What **roles** do teachers/staff have?
- What **roles** do you create for students or do they find their own?
- What **symbols** are most visible in your school – and what messages do they convey?



# The Characteristics



- **Funds** - how is funding allocated
- **People**- do students have roles?
- **Positions** –what responsibilities are afforded to teachers?
- **Physical Environment** – where and what is important?
- **Time** - what is timetabled?
- **Symbols** – what symbols are most visible?



# How you allocate funding assigns status in a school community

## Physical Environment

Where is the money spent ?

What is important?



# Symbols – Rules or Relationships?



There are no dumb questions or dumb answers.

Teasing, bullying, put-downs, and sarcasm are NOT allowed.

There are no dumb questions or dumb answers.

This is the place to TAKE RISKS and learn from mistakes.

If you don't agree, say so, and explain your thoughts.

It's OK to say "I don't know."

**CLASS RULES**

No one is perfect.

Keep asking until you really understand.

During discussions, sometimes it's OK to listen and not talk.

Don't criticize people—agree or disagree with their ideas.

It's good to have a MIND OF YOUR OWN.



People - How valued am I?



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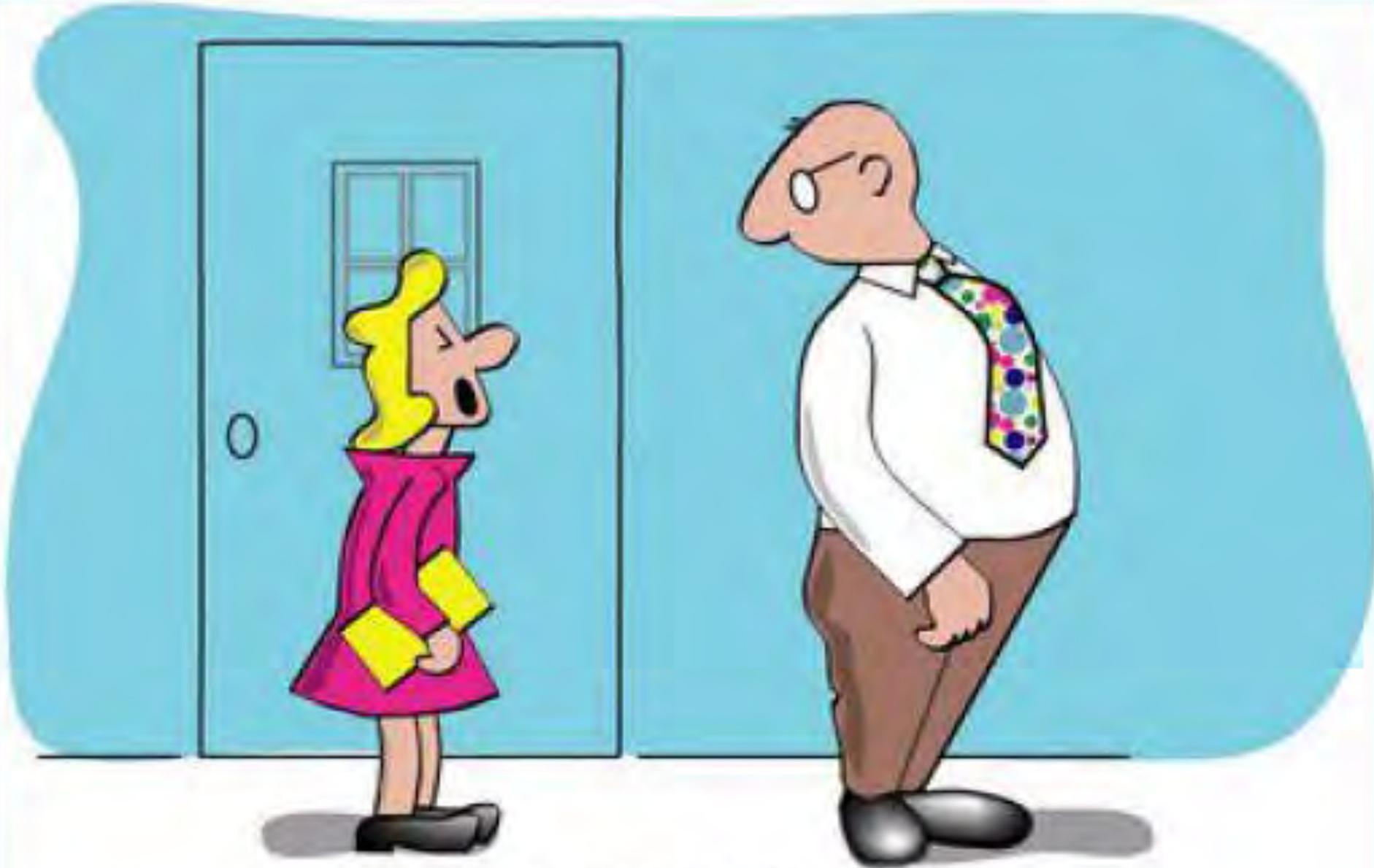


## Student Roles, Student Voice



- Identify a range of roles for students
- Cultivate an environment where students are encouraged to voice their opinion
- Seek student input on how to address learning outcomes
- Re-engage the disengaged by hearing their voice
- Nurture an interest in the physical environment by allowing students to design spaces that foster positive social environments





"As we start a new school year, Mr. Smith,  
I just want you to know that I'm an Abstract-  
Sequential learner and trust that  
you'll conduct yourself accordingly!"

*Blooming*

# Activity Setting Theory

“The important variables in activity settings are relationships because the heart of an activity setting is human interaction.”

(O'Donnell & Tharp, 1990)



# Healthy Relationships



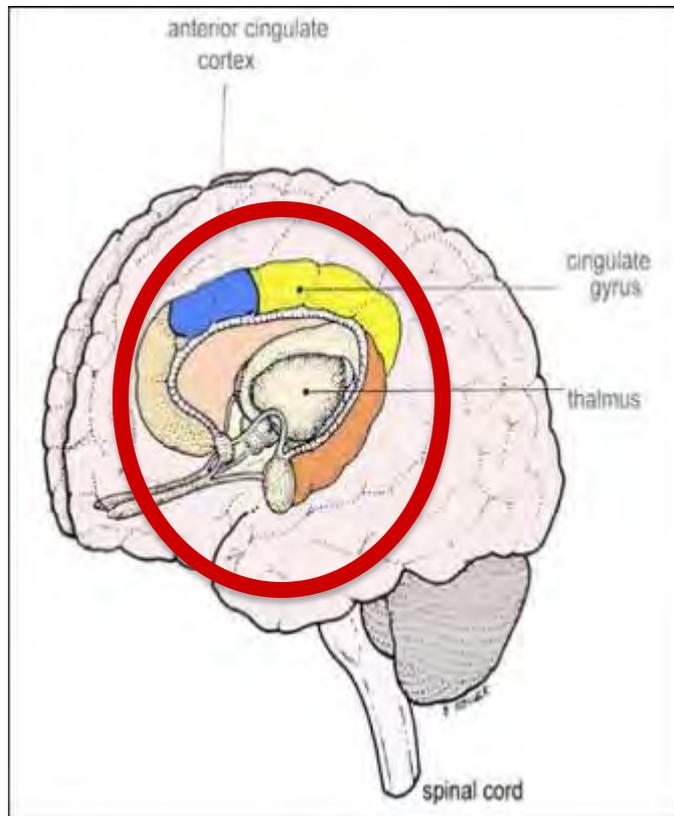
A growing body of studies find that a **positive social environment increases students' academic outcomes.** (Zin et al, 2011)

Positive **Relationships** between teachers and students and among students:  
**Increase** the psychological well-being of students  
**Decrease** absenteeism, suspensions, substance abuse, and bullying.

Establishing a **positive social environment** can benefit all stakeholders



## Individuals Need to be Connected to a Group Dynamic



We all have the need to be included

The experience of being socially excluded is physiologically the same as experiencing physical pain.

# Intuitive Senses - Self-Concept

## Positive Sense of:

Belonging  
Connectedness  
Fulfillment  
Balance  
Safety

## Negative Sense of:

Fear  
Humiliation  
Frustration  
Resentment  
Isolation



## Self-Concept:

### Positives:

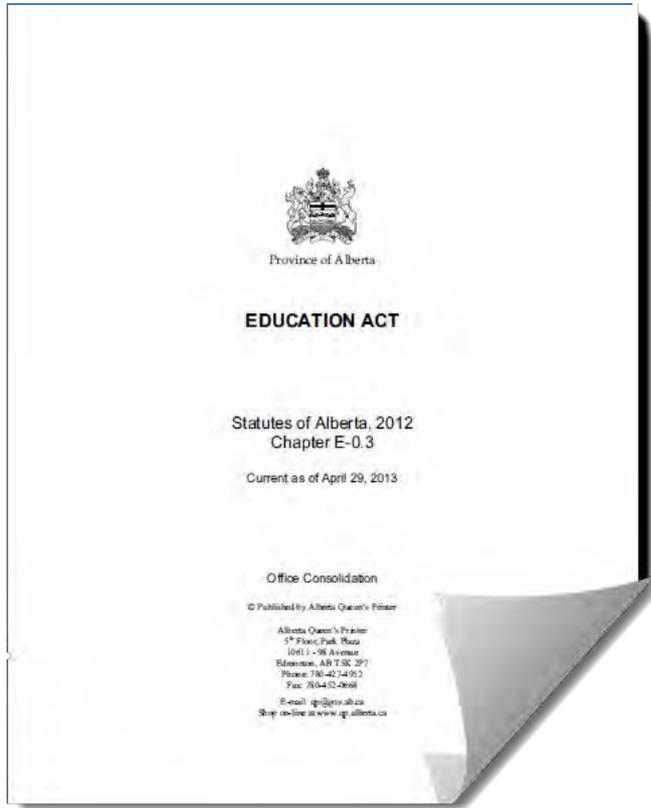
Self-esteem  
Self-confidence  
Self-worth  
Self-regard

### Self Concept:

### Negatives:

Self-loathing  
Self-disgust  
Self-revulsion  
Self-hatred

# NEW EDUCATION ACT



33 (d) ensure that each student enrolled in a school operated by the board and each staff member employed by the board is provided with a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging



# Alberta's Approach



Alberta Education states: “A school-wide approach to positive behavior effectively promotes a safe, orderly and predictable environment for learning and teaching. This approach has significant effects within the school community: it creates a positive school culture that students, parents and staff **perceive** as safe and caring.”

Source: Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools: A school-wide approach, 2008 Online:

<http://education.alberta.ca/media/697934/behaviour-complete%20for%20posting.pdf>



# Interactive Discussion



Examine photographs of school settings from the point of view of different stakeholders and consider:

- What is valued?
- How does it make you feel?

Stakeholders:

student, teacher, staff, administrator, parent, superintendent, trustee, community partner

