



# Shifting the Culture to Improve the Climate

**Principal Name:** Dr. Holly Arnold

**School Name:** Newburgh Elementary

**Team Members' Names:** Mrs. Cathy Brown and Mrs. Lisa Butcher

**Principal's Email Contact:** harnold@warrick.k12.in.us

## **Background Leading to Our Inquiry**

Newburgh Elementary once had a rich culture rooted in values and tradition. In recent years, circumstances led to a paradigm shift in the culture of the school. The climate had become toxic for some, and there was a strong desire for change. New leadership in the building opened up a perfect opportunity to implement practices leading to enhanced staff morale, teacher satisfaction, and improved teaching practices.

## **The Purpose of Our Inquiry**

The purpose of our action inquiry was to collect data to see if building a positive culture within the building where our staff members felt informed, heard, and appreciated would result in a school climate where respectful, trustworthy, caring relationships exist.

## **Our Wondering**

With this purpose we wondered how changing the school culture could improve the climate in the building resulting in:

Higher staff morale

Richer instruction

Greater job satisfaction/teacher retention

## **Our Actions**

To gain insight into our wondering we did the following:

We started the school year by holding a staff retreat and inviting all staff members. We had “get to know you” activities, planning sessions, shared expectations, and questions and answers. As stated by Gordon (2018), “You must create a positive culture that energizes and encourages each other, fosters

connected relationships and great teamwork, empowers and enables your team to learn and grow, and provides an opportunity for you to do your best work.” (p 15)

We sent out a NES staff survival snacks document to share favorite treats with colleagues.

We left positive notes on each staff member’s windshield. According to Whitaker (2012), “Treating everyone as if he or she were good is one of the biggest challenges we face in life. We must do so for a very simple reason: our actions validate the good, responsible, productive people and make the irresponsible, lazy, unpleasant people feel uncomfortable.” (p 33)

We helped coordinate a staff outing.

We had a Christmas bingo for staff members

Implemented an Above and Beyond quarterly drawing for gift cards, jeans days, and duty free days. Dundy (2010) stated that, “A healthy culture values its people.” (p 166)

Weekly communication is sent out and monthly staff meetings are held. Grift, Heflebower, Hoegh, Marzano, & Warrick (2016) believed that it was important to, “Share relevant information candidly and transparently with the entire team.” (p 27)

Lunch/recess duties were arranged by grade level to allow two days per week for grade level collaboration. Johnson, Leibowitz, & Perret (2017) feel strongly that, “teachers need greater collective professional autonomy and more support to work with one another.” (p 138)

All teachers were given the opportunity to attend professional development.

## **Data Collection**

All staff members were sent a Google survey with the following questions:

1. Do you feel the climate (culture) within the building is better this year?
2. Do you think staff morale has increased?
3. Do you feel adequately informed through email, staff meetings, etc.?
4. Do you feel that if you have concerns they are (or would be) addressed?
5. Do you feel appreciated and respected for the work that you do?
6. Do you feel you are given opportunities to lead or participate in activities within the building?
7. Do you feel you are given ample opportunities to attend professional development?
8. Do you feel you are given an appropriate amount of time to collaborate with colleagues?
9. Do you feel satisfaction with your job?
10. Do you feel you are putting effort into being better in your position?

## **Our Data**

In order to create a picture of what we learned, we analyzed the results from our survey. Survey results indicate that the climate in the building is better since changes have been made this year to the school culture. The result of increasing social events, recognition, and communication has proven impactful to the majority of our staff members. Morale is higher than in past years; and, based on survey results and comments, job satisfaction has increased. This increased job satisfaction has inspired richer, more engaging instruction and better job performance.

## **Our Discoveries**

Learning Statement One: Staff morale is a combination of emotions, attitudes, outlooks, and satisfaction. By being sincere and respectful, empowering staff members with the ability and resources to do their jobs, and recognizing them for their effort, it has been a smooth transition and we feel morale has increased throughout the building.

Learning Statement Two: Our teachers are collaborating more and attending district level PD in order to improve their practice and offer richer, more engaging instruction. They are also stepping up to take on more leadership roles in the building and contributing to the success of the school as a whole by volunteering at athletic events and participating in after-school functions.

Learning Statement Three: We have found that our staff seems happy this year and pleased with their positions. The positive vibe in the building has led to healthy relationships between staff members and enhanced relationships between students and staff.

## **Where We Are Heading Next**

We will continue to embrace opportunities to build positive, ongoing relationships with staff members. Our goal will be to provide communication, support, and appreciation. We hope to continue with our current initiatives and look for additional ideas to implement.

## **Bibliography**

Dungy, T. (2010). *The Mentor Leader*. Winter Park, FL: Legacy, LLC.

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Grift, G., Heflebower, T., Hoegh, J.K., Marzano, R.J., & Warrick, P.B. (2016). *Collaborative Teams That Transform Schools*. Bloomington, IN: Marzano Research.

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Whitaker, T. (2012). *Shifting the Monkey*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

# Shifting the Culture to Improve the Climate

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By Dr. Holly Arnold; Ms. Cathy Brown; Mrs. Lisa Butcher

Newburgh Elementary School

IPLI Cohort #6

# Background Leading to our Inquiry

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# The Purpose of our Inquiry

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- The purpose of our action inquiry was to collect data to see if building a positive culture within the building where our staff members felt informed, heard, and appreciated would result in a school climate where respectful, trustworthy, caring relationships exist.

# Our Wondering

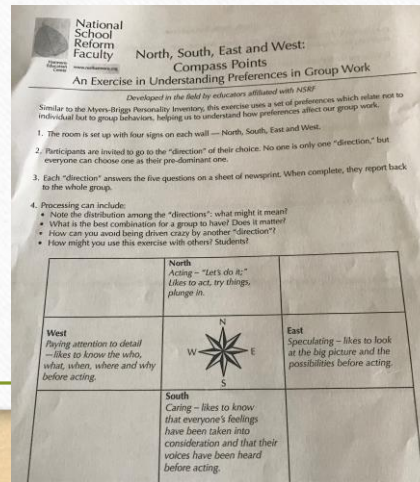
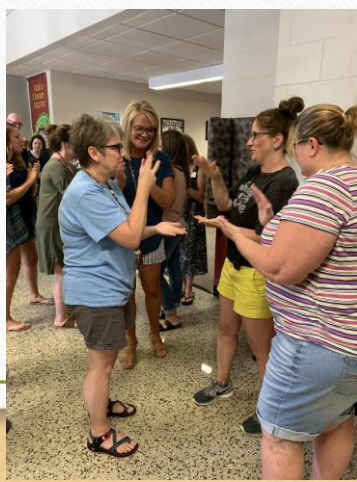
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- How could changing the school culture improve the climate in the building resulting in:
- Higher staff morale
- Richer instruction
- Greater job satisfaction/teacher retention

# Our Actions

To gain insight into our wondering we did the following:

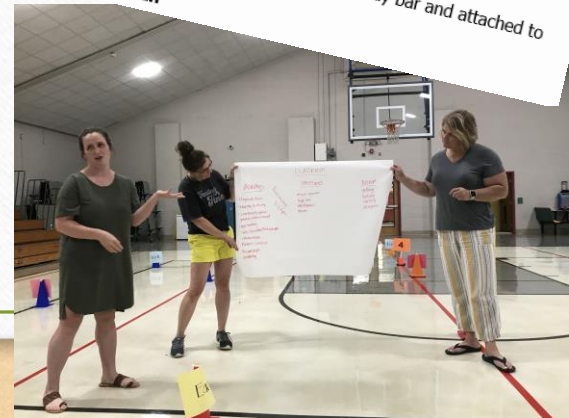
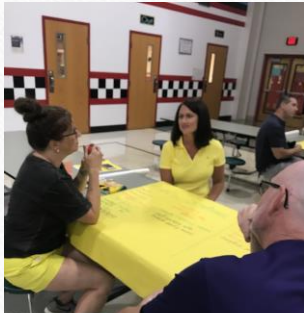
- We started the school year by holding a staff retreat and inviting all staff members. We had “get to know you” activities, planning sessions, shared expectations, and questions and answers. As stated by Gordon (2018), “You must create a positive culture that energizes and encourages each other, fosters connected relationships and great teamwork, empowers and enables your team to learn and grow, and provides an opportunity for you to do your best work.” (p 15)





# Our Actions

## Staff retreat continued



**NES Teacher Retreat**  
**Music Playing as teachers enter**  
**Introduction** – Holly lead  
**Step forward get to know you activity** – Lisa lead  
 Get in groups – Names are displayed on tables  
**Cell phone pics** – Cathy will give instructions- groups will share with each other  
**Always, Sometimes, never focusing on our school-** (tell them to assign a speaker, writer, and moral support in each group) Cathy will give instructions, give time to collaborate, then each group will have someone who shares their info with whole group. Holly will wrap up after groups share to bring all together.  
**Compass Points-** Lisa will introduce and send grade levels to cones to complete activity. Ask for a leader in each grade level to lead team through the activity. After groups discuss, Lisa lead discussion on what we learned about our teams.  
**Paper, Rock, Scissors** in hallway. To get them excited, could we tell them the winner of this gets a jeans day? Cathy will lead this ... final 2 will compete on higher level landing. Everyone cheers 😊  
**Always, Sometimes, Never focusing on Classroom-** (tell them to assign a speaker, writer, and moral support in each group) Cathy will give instructions, give time to collaborate, then each group will have someone who shares their info with the whole group. Holly will wrap up after groups share to bring it all together  
**Holly to close us out.** Each person can have a candy bar and attached to candy bar is a coupon for jeans!  
**Music Playing for lunch**

# Our Actions

- We sent out a NES staff survival snacks document to share favorite treats with colleagues.



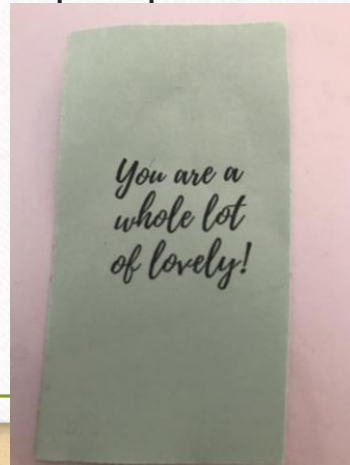
Teacher	A	B	C	D	E
Teacher	Favorite Candy	Favorite Drink	Favorite Salty Snack	Favorite Restaurant	
ARNOLD	Chewy Sweet Tarts or Skittl	Coke or Pepsi	Cheddar Cheese Pretzel P	Let Sauced or MOD Pizza	
WARNER	Heath Bar	Diet strawberry limeade (Sonic)	Doritos	Mission BBQ	
WAGNER	Peanut M&M's	Mt. Dew	Payday	Sonic	
MOSS	Reese cups	Coke, Coffee, Tea	Doritos, peanuts	Azzip	
COHEN	Hot Tamales	Coke Zero	Cashews	Azzip	
SCHNUR	Reese or Take Five	Diet Mt. Dew	Flavored Pretzels	Azzip	
HAHN	Reese Cups	Dr Pepper	Gardetto's	Mission BBQ	
GARCIA	Reese Outrageous Bar	Diet Mr. Dew	Popcom	Arazu	
STECKEL	Anything with caramel	Mt. Dew	Almonds or pretzels	Chick-fil-A/Azzip/Logan's	
FORCUM	Payday	Diet Dr. Pepper	Baked Lays chips	Panera	
GROSECLOSE	Snickers/Rolos	Strawberry slush (Sonic)	Cool Ranch Doritos	Moes	
GREEN	Reese Cups	Sweet Tea with NO ice	peanuts	Azzip	
MCINTYRE	Reese Cups	Water	none	Mister B's	
BROWN	Reese Cups	Water or Unsweet Tea	Pretzels	Hacienda or Chick-fil-A	
WRINN	Red Hots	coffee/tea	Sunchips	chick-fil-A	
MORRIS	Circus Peanuts	coffee/sweet tea	cashews	Longhorn Steak House/Azzip	
SCHMITT	Reese Cups	Dr. Pepper	almonds/cheez-it	Ropanggi	



# Our Actions

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- We left positive notes on each staff member's windshield. According to Whitaker (2012), "Treating everyone as if he or she were good is one of the biggest challenges we face in life. We must do so for a very simple reason: our actions validate the good, responsible, productive people and make the irresponsible, lazy, unpleasant people feel uncomfortable." (p 33)



# Our Actions

- We helped coordinate a staff outing.



**FRIEDMAN PARK**  
NES STAFF (and a guest) FALL GATHERING  
Saturday October 19, 2019 5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M.  
\$10 per person (Qdoba catering.....yum!)  
You provide your own beverage. (Beverages not provided)

**CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT**



shutterstock - 246276289

**BONFIRE**



**MUSIC**

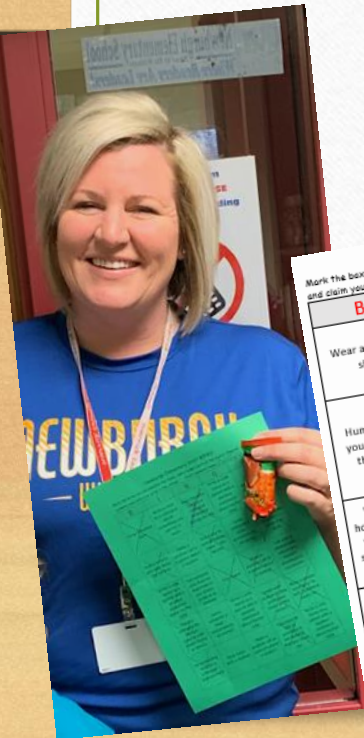


PLEASE COME JOIN THE FUN & LAUGHTER!!  
RSVP & \$10 due by September 27.



# Our Actions Continued

- We had a Christmas bingo and Secret Santa for staff members.



**Newburgh Elementary Staff BINGO**  
 Mark the boxes as you complete the tasks. Get a bingo (vertical, horizontal, diagonal, or four corners) and claim your prize in the office! Staff members home:

B	I	N	G	O
Wear a holiday shirt	Write a note to a colleague about something you admire in them	Sing a favorite song to a colleague sometime during the day	Write a note home to a parent with a positive statement about his/her child	Make a positive call to a parent about a student
Hum a tune as you walk down the hallway	Make a positive call to a parent about a student	Find a way to spread holiday cheer - you decide!	Leave someone a note - anonymously, of course	Choose kindness - show someone you care - student or adult
Write a note home to a parent with a positive statement about his/her child	Tell someone why they are important to our school (note or in person)	Free Space	Make a positive call to a parent about a student	Talk with a student with whom you haven't developed a connection
Thank a colleague for being a positive role model to you or others	Leave someone a treat - anonymously, of course!	Write a note home to a parent with a positive statement about his/her child	Greet each student as they enter your room (or the school)	Wear a holiday accessory: tie, belt, headband, socks, etc.
Do something kind for a colleague - anonymously	Have lunch with a student	Make a positive call to a parent about a student	Take time to talk to someone in the building that you rarely see	Write a note home to a parent with a positive statement about his/her child



**Secret Santa**  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

These are a few of my favorite things...

Fast Food - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Magazine - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Candy - \_\_\_\_\_  
 School Supply - \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite Munchies**  
 Sweet: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Salty: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chips: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Breakfast: \_\_\_\_\_

**Christmas Time Favorites**  
 Decorations/Items - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Flavors - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scents - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Treats - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Movie - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Song - \_\_\_\_\_

**Favorite Drinks**  
 Hot: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cold: \_\_\_\_\_

I always need: \_\_\_\_\_

I'm glad you're my Santa, but PLEASE NO - (cello, tastes, etc.)

I can't live without: \_\_\_\_\_

# Our Actions Continued

- Implemented an Above and Beyond quarterly drawing for gift cards, jeans days, and duty free days. Dungy (2010) stated that, “A healthy culture values its people.” (p 166)

**THE JEANS DAY**  
**Congratulations!**  
You've earned a day of your choice to wear jeans, with your favorite NES spirit wear. To redeem, turn into Abbey in the office.

Stemmy  
YOU'VE GONE ABOVE + BEYOND!  
Thanks so for all the words of encouragement and support you have given me during this difficult time  
Deena



Newburgh Elementary  
You went.....  
**ABOVE AND BEYOND!!**  
Coupon for:  
Cafeteria or recess  
duty covered by  
Dr. Arnold  
Please provide 2 days notice  
Expires May 15, 2020



# Our Actions Continued

- Weekly communication is sent out and monthly staff meetings are held. Grift, Heflebower, Hoegh, Marzano, & Warrick (2016) believed that it was important to, “Share relevant information candidly and transparently with the entire team.” (p 27)

EVENT	19-20	18-19	TIME	COMMENTS
D.I.A. M.O.N.D.S.	10/9/2018	10/10/2018		SHOWPLACE
A/R. ROY REWARD	5/12/2019	5/20/2019		
Warehouse supply orders DUE	8/2/2019	8/7/2018	7:00	
2-2 MEET THE TEACHER	8/8/2019	8/10/2018	1:30	
BACK TO SCHOOL ASSEMBLY	8/12/2019	8/20/2018		ENDS 8-14:19
WWEATEST window opens	8/13/2019	8/13/2018	6:00-7:00	at Terryson
VOLLEYBALL TRYOUTS begin	8/14/2019	8/23/2018		home vs Sharon
B.S. MEET THE TEACHER	8/21/2019	8/28/2018		home vs JHC
VOLLEYBALL GAME	8/22/2019	8/30/2018		
VOLLEYBALL GAME	8/29/2019			at Chandler
Warehouse supply orders DUE	9/2/2019	9/3/2018		
LABOR DAY/NO SCHOOL	9/3/2019	9/4/2018	8:30 - 11:25	
VOLLEYBALL GAME	9/3/2019		10:00	
Holly's House program starts	9/4/2019	9/5/2018	9:00	home vs Logo
P.A.T. HELPING HANNO ORIENTATION	9/4/2019	9/5/2018		
PAT MEETING	9/4/2019	8/29/2018		
LIGHT COMPANY	9/5/2019	9/6/2018		
VOLLEYBALL GAME	9/6/2019		12:45-1:45 & 1:30-2:30	NEW MUSEUM & PARK
Holly's House program ends	9/6/2019	9/27/2018	8:45-1:15	HOME VS ELBERFELD
1ST GR WALKING FIELD TRIP	9/6/2019			
2ND GR WALKING FIELD TRIP	9/10/2019	9/11/2018		
VOLLEYBALL GAME	9/11/2019	9/5/2018		
LIGHT COMPANY				

## Newburgh Elementary Faculty Meeting Agenda November 15, 2019

- ◆ 2 hour delay protocol
- ◆ PD—opportunity to share at the building level (i.e. writing, differentiation, building relationships with parents, student engagement, etc.)
- ◆ When attending a WCSC meeting (PD), please complete meeting attendance request in records AND register in ERO.
- ◆ Tardy policy in regard to breakfast—Mr. Wagner
- ◆ Site Readiness Test—Monday at 9:45 (Parker, Butcher, Krantz/Bucur, Stoffeth)
- ◆ CogAT Screener—2nd and 5th grades next week
- ◆ Medical leave of absence or FMLA—upload doctor's statement in Records
- ◆ Program assistant pay prorated—26 pays or 20 pays? Info. coming from Business Office.
- ◆ Nov. 22nd—regular pay; Nov. 29th—retro check; Dec. 1st—pay with new rate, following week—teacher appreciation grant
- ◆ Nov. 12th Core Instruction PD rescheduled to Dec. 12th
- ◆ PL221 committee—Winchester
- ◆ Curriculum—Butcher & Moss
- ◆ Technology—Parker

## Newburgh Elementary Week at a Glance November 18, 2019

- ◆ Monday—Mr. Warner here today; CogAT screener grades 2 and 5 th readiness test at 9:45 a.m. (Butcher, Parker, Stoffeth, Krantz/Bucur) at 5:00 p.m. at Evans
- ◆ Tuesday—School closed today for Red for Ed
- ◆ Wednesday—Mr. Warner here today; RTI; program practice
- ◆ Thursday—Bday breakfast; Dr. Arnold at sub interviews; NES pict program rehearsal; fine arts night for 2nd and 3rd grades at 7 p.m.
- ◆ Friday—Mr. Warner here today; pay day; lunch provided by stud

### Information:

We will have a SEL regulation room "open house" on Wed Thursday, and Friday mornings from 7:45 to 8:00 a.m. Please day to stop by the regulation room to gain a better understanding process students go through during the regulation time.

Follow up information from Writing PD: 1. Performance Tar are assigned randomly. 2. Scores are averaged and then rounded student scores a 1 on the Organization and Purpose Rubric and 2 and Evidence Rubric for an average of 1.5. That score is rounded conventions score for a total PT score.

### Upcoming events:

- 11/25/19
  - ◆ Dr. Arnold at principal's conference; Thanksgiving carry-
- 11/26/19
  - ◆ Dr. Arnold at principal's conference; SEL team meeting American Legion flag book test
- 11/27/19

## Newburgh Elementary Week at a Glance December 2, 2019

- ◆ Monday—Mr. Warner here today; SEL individual meetings with teachers of top 10 students; P.A.T. Santa Shop
- ◆ Tuesday—NES SEL team meeting; NES SEL team meeting; Co-teaching PD (Duncheon, Stoffeth, Schmitt, Krantz, Arnold); F.O.P. Christmas party; I.X.L. PD grades 3-5 at 3:15; P.A.T. meeting at 6:30
- ◆ Wednesday—Mr. Warner here today; RTI; NES Spelling Bee
- ◆ Thursday—Language Club
- ◆ Friday—Mr. Warner here today; Pay day

### Information:

Please be thinking about Deena Green and family. Deena's mother suffered a stroke and will be having open heart surgery Monday morning. Her father is in hospice care and dependent upon 24 hour assistance. Understandably, this has taken quite a toll on Deena and she could use our prayers and support.

We will have our next Above and Beyond drawing at the faculty meeting on December 13th. Please remember to give your Above and Beyond notes to the recipients and they will put them in the box for the drawing.

We may start 10 minute observations the first two weeks of December. All observations will be complete before Spring Break. Ten minute observation scores are often slightly lower due to the shorter amount of time in the classroom; however, I do anticipate all scores being in the effective (or highly effective) range. Also, begin working on Domain 3 if you haven't already. Let us know if you have questions or need examples, especially those new to the corporation. Those scoring highest on this domain will be those that seek out/lead on leadership roles, mentor others, and/or lead professional development.

### Upcoming events:

# Our Actions Continued

- Lunch/recess duties were arranged by grade level to allow two days per week for grade level collaboration. Johnson, Leibowitz, & Perret (2017) feel strongly that, “teachers need greater collective professional autonomy and more support to work with one another.” (p 138)





# Our Actions Continued

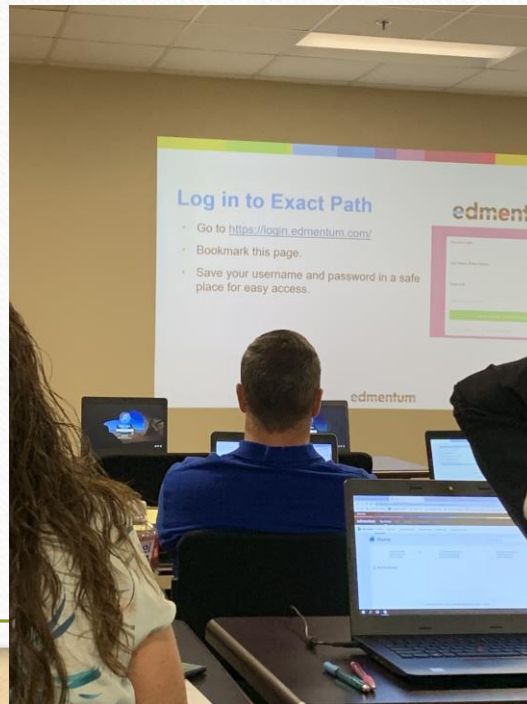
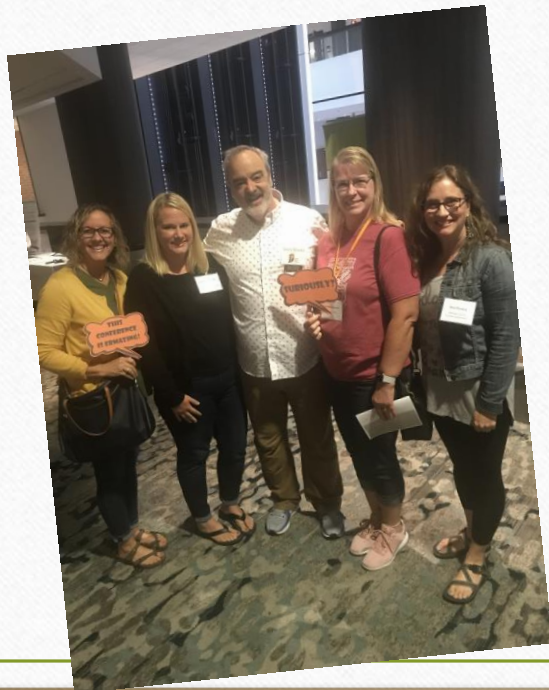
- Holiday staff dress up days



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# Data Collection Continued

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- Do you feel you are given opportunities to lead or participate in activities within the building?
- Do you feel you are given ample opportunities to attend professional development?
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# Our Data

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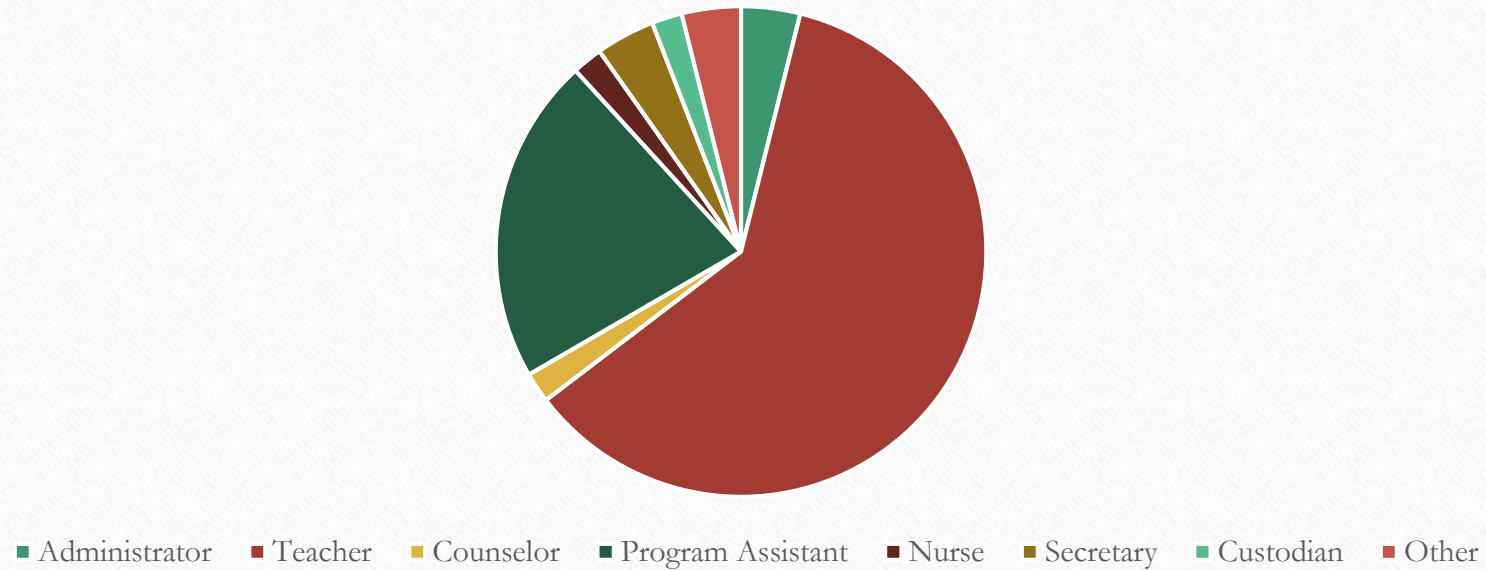
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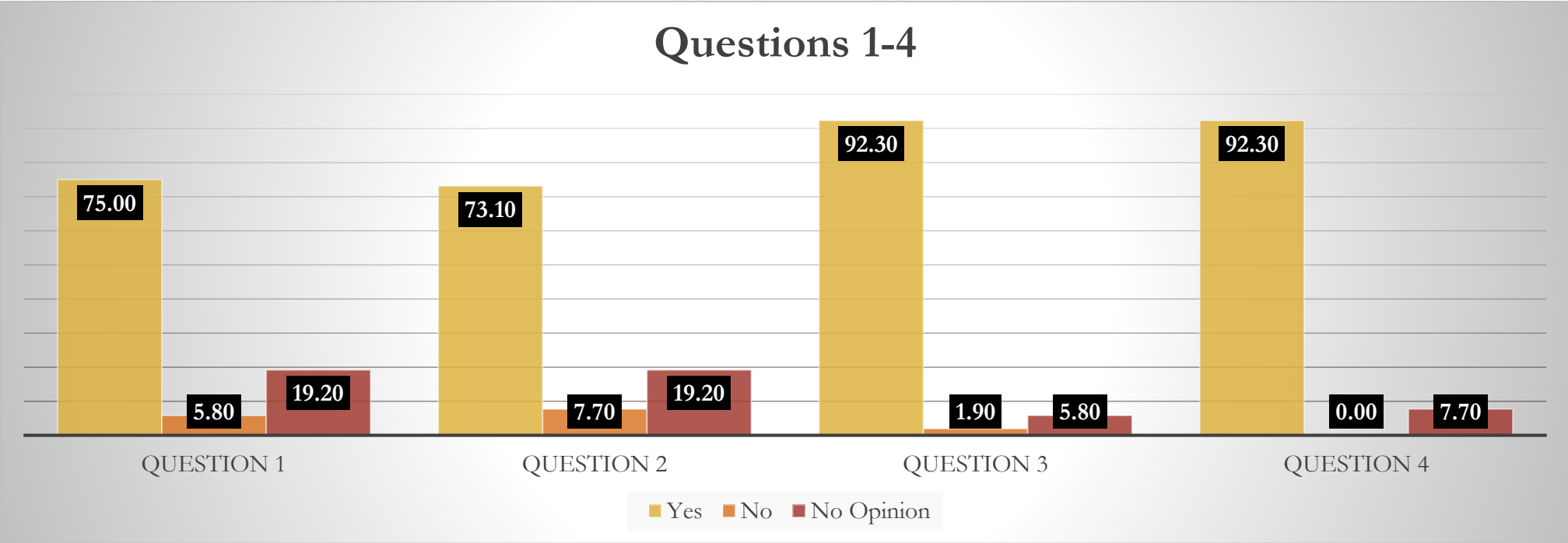
# Climate/Culture Survey Participation

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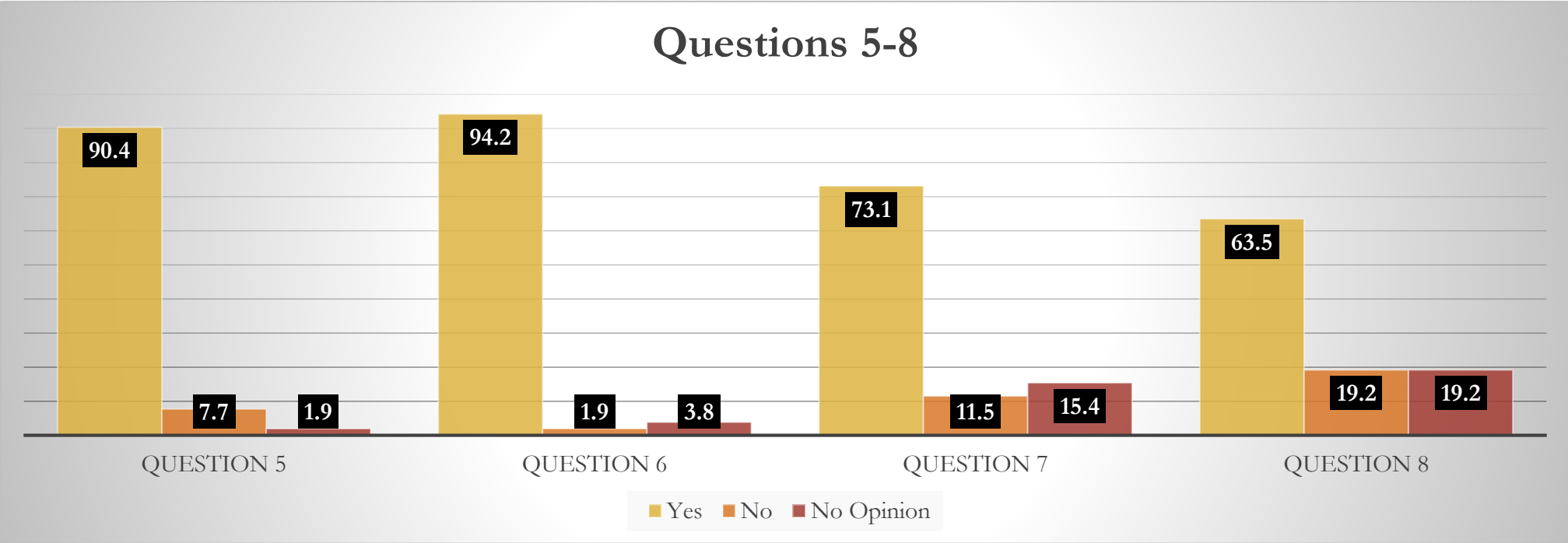
Survey Participation Classified by Job Title



# Climate/Culture Survey Data Percentages

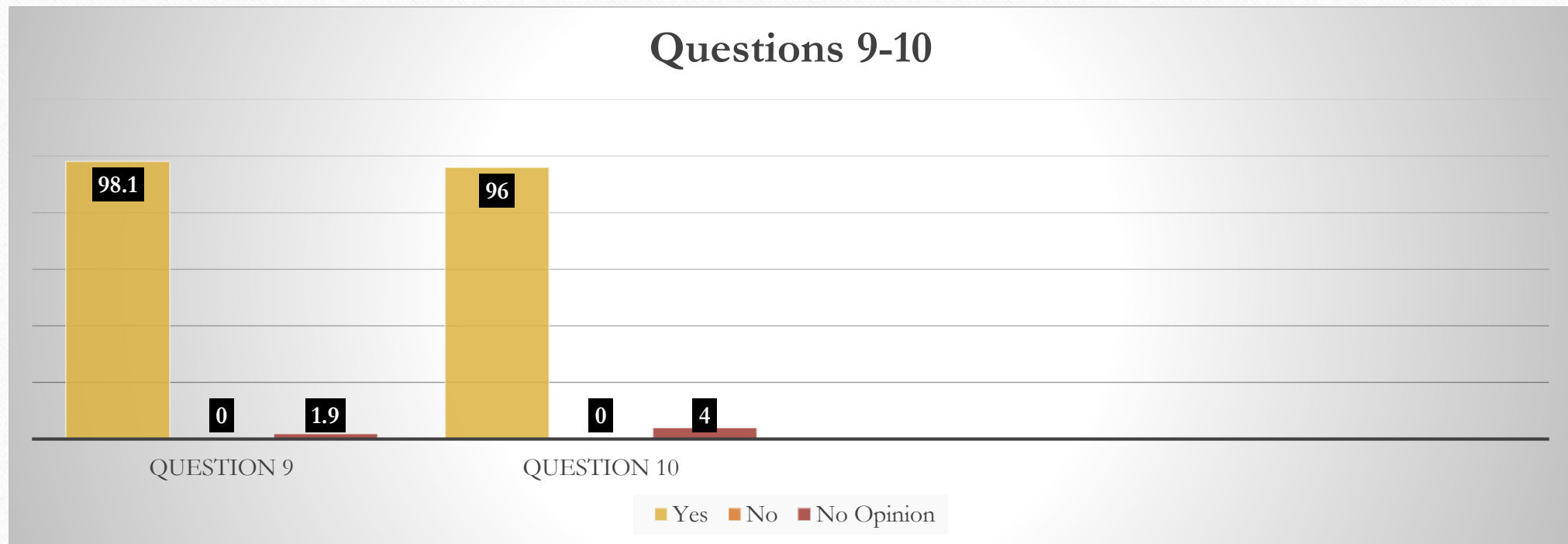


# Climate/Culture Survey Data Percentages





# Climate/Culture Survey Data Percentages



# Climate/Culture Survey Comments

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- Holly has done an excellent job at being a great leader !
- The environment at NES has truly improved so much from the past years ! We were ready for change.
- Now that we have given NWEA, I think we need training on what the scores mean and how to use the data to inform instruction.
- It is an honor to be a part of such and incredible staff!
- I am truly enjoying this school year and the attitudes of everyone throughout the building. Thank you to all who have worked on this and made it happen.
- My position is high energy and fast paced. I rarely engage in conversations with peers during the day so I am unable to answer questions about morale or improvements within the building. I am pleased with our current administration. I think they do a good job and are always willing to give me any accommodations that I have requested. They have sent positive emails to me personally regarding my performance, and I really appreciated that. From my point of view, I think things are progressing nicely and that they are doing a fantastic job.
- I love my job and this school:)
- Despite having some health issues currently, I look forward to coming to work this year. I love my job again!
- I marked Yes and No for Collaboration Question. Sometimes we get rushed in RTI or meetings with teachers because of coverage shortages or simply not enough time in the day.
- My answer "no" re: professional development is not directed at NES, but WCSC for SLPs. SLPs are required to have 30 ASHA CEUs, and in 7 years here this has only been offered by WCSC once. It is also very difficult to go to CE courses because we can not get subs. Also- no opinions on the culture/morale because I'm often in my own little speech world : )

# Our Discoveries

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As a result of analyzing our data, three important things we learned include:

- Learning Statement One: Performance is tied to satisfaction. Staff morale is a combination of emotions, attitudes, outlooks, and satisfaction. By being sincere and respectful, empowering staff members with the ability and resources to do their jobs, and recognizing them for their effort, it has been a smooth transition and we feel morale has increased throughout the building.

- Learning Statement Two: Collaboration is key to happiness. Our teachers are collaborating more and attending district level PD in order to improve their practice and offer richer, more engaging instruction. They are also stepping up to take on more leadership roles in the building and contributing to the success of the school as a whole by volunteering at athletic events and participating in after-school functions.
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# Where We are Headed Next

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- We will continue to embrace opportunities to build positive, ongoing relationships with staff members. Our goal will be to provide communication, support, and appreciation. We hope to continue with our current initiatives and look for additional ideas to implement.



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