# The Relationship Between Teacher Emotional Intelligence and Classroom Climate

in

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the incredible, passionate, dedicated educators I have had the privilege of serving alongside who were the inspiration behind this research. There is something special when you walk into certain classrooms; this research seeks to explain what that is and help all educators be the best they can be.

I also have to recognize my family for being a constant source of support. My father and mother, Jack and Mary DeMent, for stressing the importance of education, finding what makes me happy, and knowing how to push me while supporting me. My siblings, Teresa, Lou, and Alyssa, for always being on my team. No matter how far apart we are, there is a strength that comes from knowing you believe in me. To my in-laws, David and Sammie Miller, who always stepped in to help with anything and everything as I went through this five-year commitment. Because of you, our children will remember this as something their mom did to add value to the family, not take away from.

This work is in honor of our children, Emmett (9) and May (7). I hope this accomplishment shows you that you, too, can do anything if you believe in yourself, surround yourself with positive people, and follow your passion. Most importantly, this is dedicated to my husband, Bob. Your unwavering support means the most. We knew it would be a challenge as I began the program when our children were only two and four, but your faith in me has never been anything but solid. Thank you for always seeing me as the best version of myself. My doubts, points of frustration, and moments of giving up were met with understanding and a soft pull in the right direction. This is yours as much as it is mine.

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## Abstract

Classroom climate has an impact on students, and the teacher is the biggest contributing factor in how that climate is created. Teachers are expected to design a classroom climate that is positive and conducive to learning, fostered through meaningful interactions between and among the teacher and students. While positive classroom climate is essential for students, it is complex and difficult to achieve because of a multitude of variables that can go unseen.

This research examined the relationship between classroom climate and emotional intelligence of 11 fourth-grade teachers in Garden School District. The mixed methods study includes quantitative data from both the district-wide school climate survey and the teacher emotional intelligence inventory. Additionally, interviews with both the teachers and the principals served to contextualize those findings.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there is a relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and classroom climate in the subject classrooms. The competencies found in Goleman's *Theory of Emotional Intelligence* are strongly woven into the classroom climate. Based on the data collected, recommendations are made for the district to continue its work on improving classroom climate by promoting emotional intelligence understanding and development for teachers and students which includes providing opportunities for students to have voice and choice in their learning.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

Classroom climate has a profound influence on students. As the leader of the classroom, the teacher is the primary designer and builder of classroom climate. Classroom climate includes the intellectual, physical, emotional communicative, motivational, aesthetic, and ethical-moral factors in which the learners perform their learning activities, acquire socio-historical experiences, develop their personal communication skills, make friends, and share common ideals and values (Ambrose et al., 2010). Danielson (2007) further expounds that the classroom environment is "not associated with the learning of any particular content; instead, it sets the stage for all learning" (p. 28). Poor classroom climate is associated with student mental health problems, while a healthy classroom environment promotes student mental health (Somersalo, 2002). A classroom with mastery goal orientation, challenge, and a caring teacher has positive effects on student self-efficacy and achievement (Morin et al., 2013). Finally, "There is a significant positive relationship between academic achievement and classroom climate" (Jafari & Asgari, 2020, p. 62).

Classroom climate can also influence future behaviors of students, making the need for cultivating a positive climate in each classroom all the more imperative for both the immediate and long-term success of each student. In a longitudinal research study, students who reported having higher levels of positive student-teacher relationships experienced less aggression and less victimization as they continued in school. Conversely, students who did not perceive interactions between themselves and their teachers as positive experienced a higher frequency of aggression and victimization.

Therefore, positive student-teacher relationships can act as a potential mediator in peer aggression and/or violence both in the present and the future (Behrhorst, Sullivan & Sutherland, 2020). Moen et al. (2019) examined a preschool serving low-income students. Findings indicated that the "children in classrooms characterized by higher levels of emotional support experienced greater improvement in the overall relationship and closeness in the relationship, and greater decreases in conflict in the relationship" (p. 331). According to a research study by Thornberg, Wanstrom and Jungert (2018), classroom climate is a vital protective barrier against bullying and victimization both in the present and future. Students who belong to classrooms that have an authoritative climate were less likely to be bullied. The research study also found that this type of climate prevented negative bystander responses while encouraging those bystanders to support the victims.

While positive classroom climate is imperative for students, it is complex and can be difficult to achieve. Classroom climate has different dimensions including academic, management, and emotional. The emotional climate of the classroom is more overarching than the other domains as it blends the interaction with both the pedagogical and curricular elements as well as the discipline required to maintain order (Evans et al., 2010). Tsukada and Perreault (2016) found that teachers could never fully prepare for what happens in the classroom; however, a framework can be followed to build a positive classroom climate. This framework includes the place, histories, policies, and social relations to assist in unpacking complex situations as they arise. Although this can create discomfort in engaging in difficult conversations for both the teacher and the student, it is transformative in nature. Creating, leading, and maintaining a positive classroom climate,

therefore, is complex. Navigating and negotiating this complexity in the classroom rests on the ability of the teacher; and the emotional intelligence of the teacher is essential for its success.

**Emotional Intelligence**

An essential role of teachers is to build positive relationships with students and their families, making the primary job of teaching emotional at its root. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are more aware of their emotion and the emotions of others, and are effective managers of both (Goleman, 1995). Goleman defined emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize one's own feelings and the feelings of others. It also includes the ability to manage the emotions of one's self as well as the emotions of others better. Later, Mayer and Salovey (1997) added that those with strong emotional intelligence have the adeptness to understand relationships among various emotions, perceive the causes and consequences of emotions, understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and contradictory states, and understand transitions among emotions. One study by Mashburn et al. (2008) examined preschool classrooms and found that teachers' emotional intelligence predicted social skills among four-year-olds within their classroom. The research indicated that "a design space wherein high-quality emotional and instructional interactions [occur] are more likely to lead to better outcomes for children" (p. 746). Teachers who foster high-quality relationships with their students increase their students' successes, specifically across elementary grades (Zee et al., 2020), and teachers who possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more adept as they navigate the relational aspect of teaching and building a strong classroom climate.

While a strong classroom climate is important for all students, it is especially important for students in poverty, as they are in need of greater supports. Title I schools possess a higher incidence of student poverty and present a greater need for creating and maintaining a positive classroom climate that both encourages and supports each student.

The classroom climate includes the perceived quality of the setting, derived from the transactions within the environment (physical, material, organizational, operational, and social variables) (Adelman & Taylor, 1997). The ability of the teacher to facilitate these transactions impacts classroom climate. A research article collected data in the form of observations, interviews, and academic assessments specific to one classroom comprised of at-risk students. Its findings included that because the teacher met the emotional needs of her students by showing care, respect, and physical closeness, the students' level of academic achievement increased. Her classroom organization was also designed to promote a sense of security and safety for the members of the classroom. The students' positive attitudes toward the school and staff also strengthened. "It is important that teachers be aware that the many decisions about classroom organization have ramifications for students' beliefs about themselves and about tasks. These beliefs, in turn, will mediate the effects of academic instruction" (Pierce, 1994, p.42). Another article examined the classroom management strategies in schools with high levels of poverty. The author posits effective classroom management may support student learning. Additionally, creating consistency in these classroom routines increases moral behavior, engagement, and focus. "Building authentic teacher-student relationships and uncovering natural leaders in the classroom can significantly impact the ability to support hard-to-reach students" (Blake, 2017, p. 17).

## Theoretical Framework

The theory of Marzano's Evidence Based Classroom Management and Goleman's (1995) theory of Emotional Intelligence (EI) are the most appropriate theoretical frameworks to use when examining the relationship between teacher emotional intelligence and the classroom climate. Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence posits that people exhibit EI in five domains: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The more emotionally intelligent a person is the more EI domains they will exhibit and they will exhibit greater capacity within each domain. Emotional intelligence (EI) affects classrooms daily. "As emotional intelligence rises, so does academic performances, measures of relatedness, the ability to communicate motivational messages such as vision statements and other similar criteria. As EI declines, problem behaviors, deviance, and drug use rise" (Mayer et al., 2004, p. 209-210). The lack of emotional abilities within a classroom leads to disruptive behavior, not only to those abilities of the students but those of the teacher (Esturgo-Deu & Sala-Roca, 2010).

The theory of classroom management coordinates with the theory of emotional intelligence. Research has shown that the teacher might be the most important factor in a classroom that is within the school's control (Marzano & Marzano, 2003). The authors continue to explain that an impactful teacher's functions are categorized into three roles: instructional strategies, classroom curriculum, and classroom management, with classroom management being the foundation that allows for the other two roles to function effectively.

The Marzanos posit classroom managers are made, not born. “Good classroom managers are teachers who understand and use specific techniques. Awareness of and training in these techniques can change teacher behavior, which in turn changes student behavior (p. 11). Unfortunately, not all teachers are able to establish and maintain a positive classroom climate. Additionally, there is little research surrounding the development of teacher EI and how teacher EI can build a positive classroom climate in elementary schools. This study hopes to provide an understanding of teacher emotional intelligence, how it impacts the classroom climate in elementary schools, and how these skills can be developed.

**Context**

The setting for this research study is seven elementary schools located in a public school district in Pennsylvania that will be referred to as Garden School District (GSD). GSD is located in a south-central county in Pennsylvania. GSD spreads over 100 square miles and includes four townships. There are eight elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. Of the eight elementary schools, seven were selected for this study as the researcher is an administrator in one of the buildings. These elementary schools will be referred to as Lilac, Rose, Tulip, Orchid, Daffodil, Daisy, and Poppy Elementary School.

The schools in this district were selected because of their reputation in the community for positive culture and high academic achievement. The district was also selected for convenience; the researcher is a principal in the district and has permission to conduct the study. Additionally, the district recently administered a school climate survey

to students, parents, and teachers. Data were reported by building and the researcher has permission to access this data as well. Additionally, the researcher, through informal observations, has noticed positive interactions among the students, staff, and administrator in these elementary schools and would like to further investigate how this occurs and how, if at all, emotional intelligence plays a part in the classroom climate.

Garden School District is home to approximately 9,151 students. Of these students, 21% are economically disadvantaged, 11% qualify for special education, 4% are English language learners, 3.8% have parents or guardians active in the military, 0.8% are labeled gifted, and 0.2% are in foster care. Racially, 70% are white, 16% are Asian, 5.3% are Hispanic, 5.1% are two or more races, 3.1 % are black, 0.5% of the students are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.1% are Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

Rose Elementary School serves 357 students. It is a Title I school as it has 44.5% of the student population receiving free and reduced meals (the highest percentage of the three schools). Of the student population, 12.3% receive special education services, 7.6% of students are English language learners, 34.2% have a parent or guardian active in the military, 0.0% are in foster care, and 0.0% are identified as gifted. The student body is made up of individuals who are White (79.8%), two or more races (6.2%), Hispanic (8.1%), Asian (3.6%), and Black (2%).

Tulip Elementary School serves 523 students. It is a Title I school with 22.4% of the student population identified as economically disadvantaged. 12.8% receive special education services while less than 1% of the students receive English Language Learner services. The student body is made up of individuals who are White (86.2%), Hispanic

(5.2%), and 4.4% identified as being two or more races. There are also students who identify themselves as Asian (2.9%), Black (1.2%), and American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.2%).

Daffodil Elementary School houses 576 students and is also identified as a Title I school. The student population consists of 25.2% economically disadvantaged individuals, with 9% of the students receiving special education services, and 5.9% of the students are English Language Learners. The student body consists of individuals who are White (76.7%), Asian (6.6%), Hispanic (5.7%), two or more races (5.7%), Black (4.7%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.4%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander (0.2%).

Daisy Elementary School houses 454 students. Of those students, 18.3% are economically disadvantaged, 8.4% receive special education services, and 6.8% are English Language Learners. The student body is made up of individuals who are White (68.5%), Asian (17.2%), two or more races (5.7%), Black (2.9%), American Indian/Alaskan Native (0.9%), and Hispanic (5.1%).

Lilac Elementary School is home to 479 students. The student population consists of individuals who are economically disadvantaged (15.5%), enrolled in special education (5.9%), and receiving English Language services (6.3%). 61% of students are White, 5.4% are two or more races, 26.5% are Asian, 3.1% are Black, 0.2% are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 3.8% are Hispanic.

Poppy Elementary School has 925 students with 20.2% of students economically disadvantaged, 6.9% in special education, and 7.1% receiving English Language services. 51.6% of students are White, 26.8% are Asian, 4.2% are Black, 0.3% are Native

Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 1% are American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 8.9% are Hispanic.

Finally, Orchid Elementary School serves 550 students. Of those students, 12.9% are economically disadvantaged, 10.7% receive special education services, and 2.7% are English Language Learners. 70.7% of the student body is White, 18.2% are Asian, 8.9% are Hispanic, 5.8% are two or more races, 1.5% are Black, and 0.4% are American Indian/Alaskan Native.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic data for each school and the district as a whole.

**Table 1**

*Summary of School and District Demographic Data*

| Demographic Data | Garden SD | Rose ES | Tulip ES | Daffodil ES | Daisy ES | Lilac ES | Poppy ES | Orchid ES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollment | 9436 | 357 | 523 | 576 | 454 | 479 | 925 | 550 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 21.0% | 44.5% | 22.4% | 25.2% | 18.3% | 15.5% | 20.2% | 12.9% |
| Special Education | 11.0% | 12.3% | 12.8% | 9.0% | 8.4% | 5.9% | 6.9% | 10.7% |
| English Language | 4.0% | 7.6% | .08% | 5.9% | 6.8% | 6.3% | 7.1% | 2.7% |
| Foster Care | 0.2% | 0% | .08% | 0.0% | .4% | 0.5% | 0% | 0.2% |
| Military Connected | 3.8% | 4.2% | 12.8% | 7.5% | 2.6% | 2.7% | 5.6% | 2.9% |
| Gifted | 0.6% | 0.0% | 1.0% | 0.0% | 0% | 0.4% | 0.3% | 0.4% |
| White | 70.0% | 79.8% | 86.2% | 76.7% | 68.5% | 61% | 51.6% | 70.7% |
| Two or More Races | 5.1% | 6.2% | 4.4% | 5.7% | 5.5% | 5.4% | 7.2% | 5.8% |
| Asian | 16.0% | 3.6% | 2.9% | 6.6% | 17.2% | 26.5% | 26.8% | 18.2% |
| Black | 3.1% | 2.0% | 1.2% | 4.7% | 2.9% | 3.1% | 4.2% | 1.5% |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 0% | 0% | 0.3% | 0% |
| American Indian/ Alaskan Native | 0.5% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.4% | 0.9% | 0.2% | 1% | 0.4% |
| Hispanic | 5.3% | 8.1% | 5.2% | 5.7% | 5.1% | 3.8% | 8.9% | 3.5% |

## Purpose and Significance of the Study

This study seeks to investigate teacher emotional intelligence in fourth-grade classrooms and how, if at all, it impacts the classroom climate. A teacher's emotional intelligence will be viewed as it is defined by Goleman (1995) in the ability to recognize one's own feelings and the feelings of others, and the ability to motivate and manage the emotions of one's own self and others better. If teacher emotional intelligence is a factor in classroom climate, and teacher emotional intelligence can be improved, then it should be developed in teacher preparation programs and included in professional development for onboarding new teaching staff and further developing current staff to best meet the needs of the students in these Title I elementary schools. Research questions for this study include:

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the emotional intelligence of the teacher and their classroom climate?
2. What are the teacher, student, and administrator perceptions of the teacher's emotional intelligence?
3. What are the administrator, teacher, and student perceptions of the classroom climate?

## Research Methods

This research will be a qualitative case study exploring and analyzing the experiences, aptitudes, and conditions surrounding teacher emotional intelligence and the impact it has on classroom climates in the three focus elementary schools. Teachers will

complete an emotional intelligence survey and participate in individual interviews to determine the context surrounding their practices. Administrator interviews will also be conducted to provide a greater analysis of the teacher's emotional intelligence and their classroom climate. The researcher will also utilize district and building data derived from a recently administered culture and climate survey of parents, staff, and students.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

One limitation is that this study focuses on specific elementary schools, so the results may not be generalizable to other schools. The research also only focuses on fourth grade as that was the grade level with staff, parents, and students who participated in the school climate survey. Some educators may not feel comfortable being a part of this survey due to insecurities surrounding the concept of their emotional intelligence being evaluated. Another limitation is the multiple definitions of emotional intelligence and classroom climate.

It is important to note that this research took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. It shaped the process of data collection in that the researcher was unable to do face-to-face interviews, and had to ask teachers and principals to reflect on pre-pandemic times with certain interview questions. Some of the fourth-grade teachers interviewed were not face-to-face teachers, so they were a year removed from the physical classroom climate. Additionally, all of the interviews took place via zoom to ensure safe practices.

Some delimitations of this study include the number of classrooms and teachers willing to participate in this study. Teachers and administrators may be wary of voicing

their opinion in individual interviews, skewing the data due to honesty, bias, or situational factors.

## Definitions

**Classroom Climate**. Includes the intellectual, physical, emotional, communicative, motivational, aesthetic, and ethical-moral factors in which the learners perform their learning activities, acquire socio-historical experiences, develop their personal communication skills, make friends, and share common ideals and values (Ambrose et al., 2010).

**Emotional Intelligence.** The ability to recognize one's own feelings and the feelings of others, the ability to motivate and manage the emotions of his own and others better (Goleman, 1995).

**School Climate.** The patterns of school life experiences that reflect norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures (National School Climate Council [NSCC], 2007, p. 4).

**Elementary Teacher**. For the purpose of this study, an elementary teacher is a full-time instructor whose responsibilities included instructing students enrolled in any grade from kindergarten through fifth grade in a Title I public school in Central Pennsylvania.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review will offer a perspective on classroom climate by examining school climate and the factors and frameworks that contribute to it. As classroom climate can only exist within the parameters established by the school, it is important to examine school climate prior to investigating classroom climate. The review will also present the literature surrounding teachers who foster a positive classroom climate specific to emotional intelligence. Finally, literature surrounding teacher emotional intelligence and its impact on classroom climate will be presented. The researcher was specifically interested in how students living in poverty can benefit from a positive classroom climate. Databases used to gather the literature in the review included ProQuest, EBSCOHost, and ERIC. The main key terms used in these searchers were emotional intelligence, school environment, classroom environment, and student poverty.

Throughout the literature, the terms 'classroom climate' and 'classroom environment' are used interchangeably. For the purpose of this study, the term 'classroom climate' will be used as it is inclusive of the environment established within the classroom. Classroom climate refers to the specific instructional environments that individual teachers create; it is related to the culture and the context of the learning environment (Schweig et al., 2019). Additionally, classroom climate and school climate are the terms used in federal legislation. The Every Student Succeeds Act of 2016 (ESSA) uses climate when describing the strong relationship between positive school climate and student learning and success. The law provides school leaders with an opportunity to design learning environments that include social, emotional, and behavioral supports, which are integral in promoting effective teaching and, in turn,

student academic achievement (NASP, 2020). In order to have a school climate that accomplishes this, one must drill down to analyze the classroom climate.

**School Climate**

School climate can encourage or stifle learning (Shields, 1991). Barrientos et al. (2019) found that teachers believe they do not have adequate training in social-emotional skills, which are necessary for effective and positive classroom management. Furthermore, the emotional intelligence of the teacher can shape the emotional intelligence of students in his or her classroom. One study by Cohen-Katz, Sternlieb, Hansen and Dostal (2016) examined emotional intelligence in a clinical learning environment. The results indicated that a nurturing educational environment created an emotionally intelligent learning community. A study conducted in an undergraduate class focused on building emotional intelligence for student success. It found that when intentional emotional intelligence building classroom exercises are included in the classroom setting, students show improvements in confidence, communication with peers and trust with the instructor (Shah & Galantino, 2019).

The concern with school climate has been prevalent since the turn of the 20th century. Perry (1908) wrote that students are influenced by the environment in which they learn and, therefore, it is the school's duty to provide an atmosphere filled with pride that is passed on from cohort to cohort by all of the connected stakeholders. Halpin and Croft (1963) pioneered an assessment instrument to measure school environment with the development of the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ) which analyzed school climate specific to teacher and principal behavior. They further identified

four essential teacher qualities that influence school environment: disengagement (uncommitted to the task), hindrance (teachers perceived they are burdened by non-instructional tasks), esprit (satisfaction with personal and professional needs and accomplishments), and intimacy (positive relations with colleagues). Hoy et al. (1991) later revised the teacher factors into the categories of Collegial Teacher Behavior (supportive and professional interactions among teachers), Intimate Teacher Behavior (strong, cohesive social supports among teachers), and Disengaged Teacher behavior (lack of meaning and focus among interactions).

The school climate is made up of multiple dimensions including the organizational, environmental, social emotional, structural, and linguistic elements (Freiberg, 1999). Freiberg and Stein (1999) describe school climate as:

> …the heart and soul of a school. It is about the essence of a school that leads a child, a teacher, an administrator, a staff member to love the school and to look forward to being there each school day. *School Climate* is about the quality of a school that helps each individual feel personal worth, dignity and importance, while simultaneously helping create a sense of belonging to something beyond ourselves. The climate of a school can foster resilience or become a risk factor in the lives of people who work and learn in a place called school. (p. 11)

In an effort to build and sustain a positive school climate, various frameworks have been created and adopted by schools and districts. This review presents frameworks pertinent to this study which include: Social Emotional Learning (SEL), Positive

Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS), and Restorative Practices (RP). Mindfulness is also presented as it is used as a tool in various frameworks.

### *Social Emotional Learning*

Schools have an important role in providing students with not only an education, but also the necessary skills to become productive members of society. Maximizing a student's potential to be successful in life involves a mix of both academic achievement and social-emotional competence (Zins & Elias, 2007). Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is most commonly defined as the development of capacity in students to know and control emotions, solve problems, improve resiliency, and ability to develop positive relationships (Zins & Elias, 2007). When appropriately embedded into a school's culture and climate, SEL can act as a preventative technique or intervention for misconduct, resulting in a decreased need to rely on exclusionary discipline to control student behavior (McBride et al., 2016; Osher et al., 2010). SEL has the potential to provide school leaders with a way to address the behavioral needs of an increasingly diverse student population.

With the primary focus of developing students' abilities to recognize and manage emotions, developing empathy and caring for others, establishing positive relationships, and making responsible decisions (McBride et al., 2016; Osher et al., 2010; Zins & Elias, 2007), SEL has powerful implications for school leaders and classroom teachers. Through implementation of SEL, schools can teach students "self-regulation, self-monitoring, and social skills" (Norris, 2003, p. 313) which may help to prevent negative behaviors.

Two frameworks that utilize SEL in these ways to teach appropriate behaviors and address negative behaviors are Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) and Restorative Practices (RP).

### *Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support*

The Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) framework fosters an environment of consistency, community, and reflection. Using a three-tiered system, PBIS works to improve student behavior both academically and socially through incorporating school-wide values, interventions, and supports while consistently monitoring and reviewing data to inform practice (Ziomek-Daigle et al., 2016). The tiers are responsive in scope, moving from universal support to group support to individual support, depending on student responses at each level of intervention (Turnbull et al., 2002). SEL is used at all three levels of the PBIS framework.

The primary prevention level is a school-wide program that focuses on appropriate behavior expectations through direct instruction, positive reinforcements, and consequences for problem behavior (Ogulmus & Vuran, 2016). This universal support is taught to all students in all of the areas within a school, such as the cafeteria, hallway, playground, and classroom. It is a proactive approach to preventing negative behaviors by utilizing SEL. Turnbull et al. (2002) identified a key benefit of tier one for students in its availability to all students "without identification or referral for specific problem behavior" (p. 380). Universal support is the least invasive element, while secondary and tertiary responses increase in intensity (Turnbull et al., 2002). The second tier specializes in group-systems for students with at-risk behaviors, while the tertiary level is more individualized for students with high-risk problems (Ogulmus & Vuran, 2016). With

proper training and support, teachers and administrators were able to implement PBIS with fidelity and reap the benefits

### *Safe and Responsive Schools*

Following an increase of school violence in the 1990s, many schools and districts implemented zero tolerance policies to help maintain order. However, even with the implementation of these policies, an environment that prevented school violence remained out of reach (Skiba et al., 2005). National data suggested that in middle and high schools in urban areas serving lower socio-economic status (SES) minority students, students were twice as likely to be victims of school violence as their suburban counterparts (Peterson et al., 2002). Funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education and developed to address the continued need for schools to decrease violence and improve student behavior, Safe and Responsive Schools (SRS) was born (Skiba et al., 2005).

SRS is a framework that helps schools develop a comprehensive and preventative process to address school violence and student behavior through comprehensive planning as a part of the school improvement planning process, prevention, and parent-community involvement (Skiba et al., 2005). There are three components to the SRS model: programmatic prevention efforts (for example, conflict resolution) that help establish a violence-free school climate, and screening and assessment processes to identify students who may be at risk and to identify local needs, and planned and carefully delivered responses to disruptive behaviors that occur (Skiba et al., 2005).

### *Restorative Practices*

Developed as a response to the disproportionate number of Black youths in the criminal justice system, restorative justice, according to Zehr (as cited in Kline, 2016), operates on the belief that "we are all connected through a web of relationships" and when a wrongdoing or crime occurs, that "web" or community is damaged (p. 97). Preventative and responsive restorative practices enable teachers and administrators to develop and maintain inclusive learning communities where all stakeholders have a voice. Considered informal, class meetings provide teachers and students the opportunity to explore emotional and social tensions, to develop a knowledge and understanding of each other, and to address minor wrongdoings that harm their learning community (Gray & Drewery, 2011; Kaveney & Drewery, 2011; Walsh, 2015). As a preventive response, class meetings take place as part of a daily or weekly classroom routine. Vaandering (2014) found that RP was successful in classrooms where teachers viewed it as part of an "engaged, productive pedagogy" (p. 65) that ties the social-emotional learning aspects of RP to the academic learning in their classrooms. On the other hand, she found teachers who viewed RP as just another way to manage negative behaviors had little success in developing relationships and reducing behaviors resulting in office discipline referrals.

### *Mindfulness*

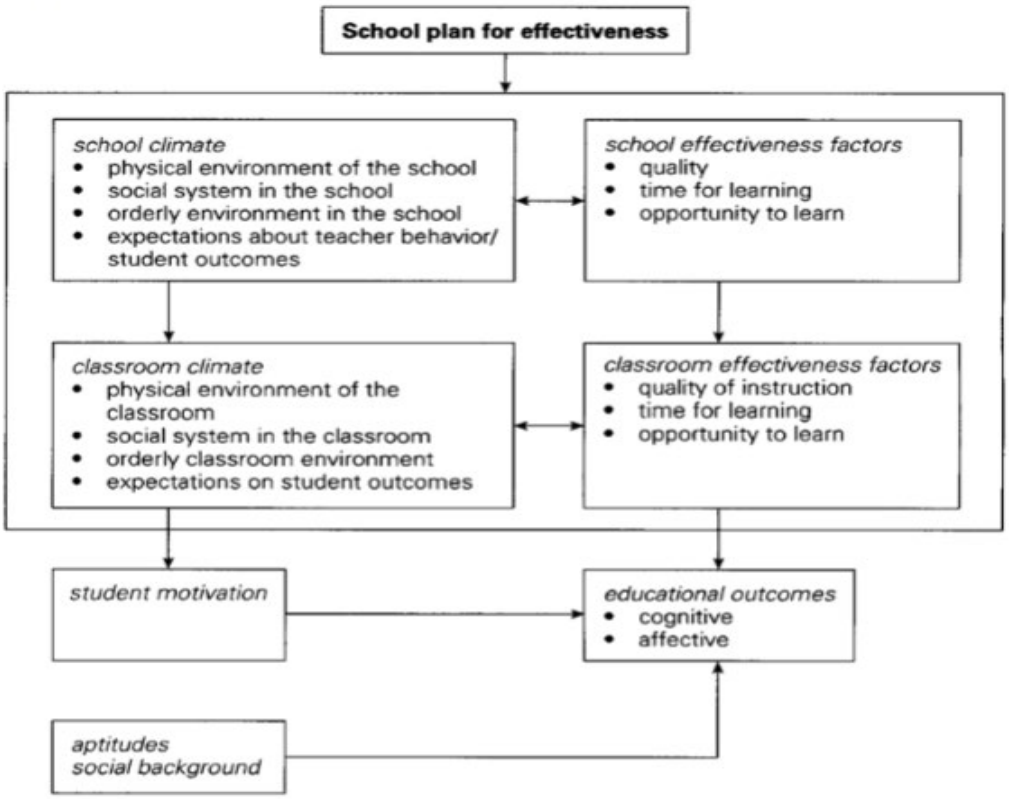
Mindfulness is defined as "developing a conscious awareness of thoughts, feelings and perceptions in the present moment" (Black & Fernando, 2013). As students learn to identify their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions, they can begin to understand the causes, or triggers, of such emotions. Additionally, mindfulness provides students different strategies, such as mindful breathing and mindful eating, that help the students

focus on the present moment. The purpose of teaching mindfulness is to help students strengthen their attention and emotional coping skills in order to support their mental health and academic achievement (Harpin et al., 2016), which is particularly helpful for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds who often exhibit weaker abilities in these areas.

The school climate, as impacted by the adopted framework, directly impacts the classroom climate and student motivation as evidenced in Figure 1. The school plan for effectiveness is adapted from Figure 1, adapted from *The role of school and classroom climate in elementary school learning environments* by B.P.M Creemers and G.J.Reezigt, 1999, p. 31.

**Figure 1**

*School Plan for Effectiveness*




*Note*. School climate and effectiveness directly impact the classroom climate and effectiveness. This influences student motivation and educational outcomes. Student aptitudes and social background have an additional impact on those outcomes.

**Classroom Climate**

Classroom climate is derived from school climate; however, each classroom has its own context and culture, which is constructed by the teacher. Creemers and Reezigt (1999) divided classroom climate factors into four sets (p. 35):

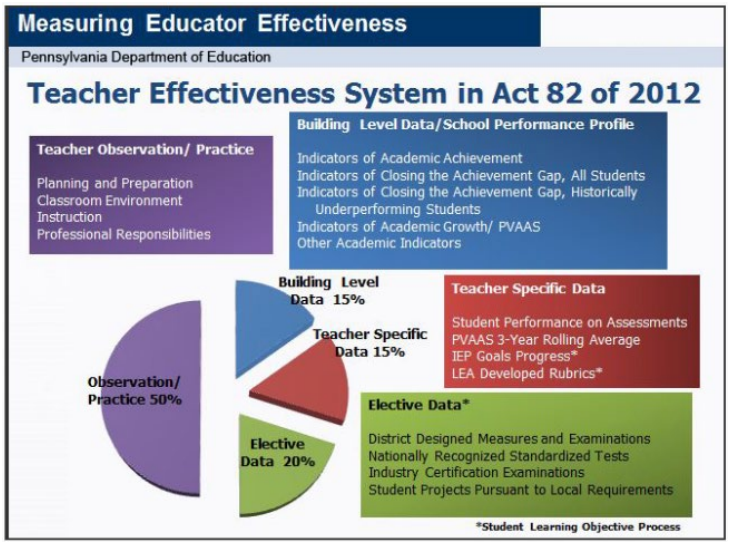
- the physical environment of the classroom (for example, its size, and its location within the school)
- the social system (relationships and interactions between students and interactions between students and their teachers)

- an orderly classroom environment (arrangement of the classroom, coziness, functionality)
- teacher expectations about students outcomes (positive expectations, feelings of self-efficacy, professional attitude)

These factors closely connect to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)'s Teacher Effectiveness System in Act 82 of 2012 (see Figure 2). Starting in the 2013-2014 school year, PDE determined that professional and temporary classroom teachers' evaluations should have 50% of the score to be attained from classroom observations (Public School Code of 1949, 2012). As indicated in Figure 2, these classroom observations include a component of classroom environment. PDE issued a statement regarding rating tools used to measure teacher performance, indicating that "The Classroom Teacher Effectiveness Evaluation System for professional employees holding instructional certificates has been implemented as of July 1, 2013). The teacher observation/evidence practice model is the *Danielson Framework for Teaching* (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2012).

**Figure 2**

*Measuring Educator Effectiveness*




The Danielson Framework identifies Domain 2 as The Classroom Environment. It includes the components of creating an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, and organizing physical space (Danielson, 2007, p. 28). Effective teachers manage relationships with colleagues and students to ensure that they are positive and supportive; teachers recognize the wide variety of backgrounds students bring to the classroom and learn to see through that perspective. When all students feel safe and valued, they know they will be treated well by their teacher and, in turn, be able to learn. These types of interactions between the teacher and the students are as important as those among the students. When a teacher provides an opportunity and puts a value on student relationships, it can have an extreme impact on their sense of self-worth (Danielson, 2007). The distinguished teacher is one whose "interactions with students reflect genuine respect and caring for individuals as well as groups of students. Students appear to trust the teacher with sensitive information" (Danielson, 2007, p. 66). The development and sustainment of relationships is created with careful planning, including those of procedures and processes within the classroom environment.

A smoothly functioning classroom is needed for a positive and effective classroom climate. The teacher's management of classroom procedures determines how the students will operate. Danielson (2007) states that expert teachers put time into establishing routines and procedures at the beginning of the year. Wong and Wong (1991) state that one of their three characteristics of an effective teacher is that he or she is an extremely good classroom manager. This management includes that of instructional groups, transitions, materials and supplies, and non-instructional tasks. The distinguished classroom manager focuses on the students' role in the classroom routines and procedures in which they have a voice and a responsibility for the establishment and follow-through of these processes (Danielson, 2007). This management also applies to the student behavior.

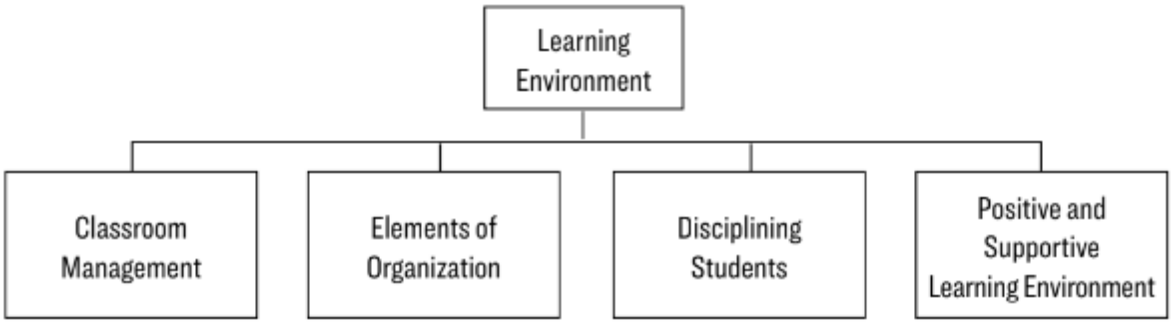
The final component of the classroom environment illustrated by the Danielson Framework is managing student behavior. According to Danielson (2007), "Students who have poorly developed social skills or low self-esteem find opportunities to initiate oral and physical confrontations with other students, disrupting a class" (p. 71). In an effort to prevent this, the distinguished teacher has certain characteristics of the classroom environment, including clear and consistent expectations, developmentally appropriate standards, awareness of students and overall environment, composure, individualized behavior redirection, and student ownership of behavior.

Fraser (1994) recognized "learning environments to be consistently and strongly associated with achievement and affective outcomes; with better achievement on a variety of outcome measures occurring in classes perceived as having greater cohesiveness, satisfaction and goal direction; and less disorganization and cohesiveness"

(p. 67). The learning environment, as explained by Stronge (2018), is a critical component of the qualities of an effective teacher. “Learning environment refers to a teacher’s abilities in governing the conditions, circumstances, and influences in the classroom that surround and affect the development and performance of students” (p. 179). There are four factors contributing to the learning environment as indicated in Figure 3: Framework for the Learning Environment. Classroom management is best designed when it includes rules and procedures that are created with the students. Effective classroom managers are well prepared and keep students involved in the learning process while monitoring and managing student behavior. Those teachers who are aware of their surroundings are most adept at preventing misbehavior.

**Figure 3**

*Framework for the Learning Environment*




A variety of tools have been developed to quantitatively measure classroom climate. One early tool, created by Fraser and Fisher (1983) was the Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ) which included five variables that indicated actual-preferred interaction. It assessed students’ and teachers’ perceptions of the classroom environment. It examined the dimensions of personalization, participation,

independence, investigation, and differentiation within the classroom. The questionnaire has two versions: a long version with 50 items and a short version with 25 items. Later, the Classroom Environment Scale (CES) was designed for secondary students and measured involvement, affiliation, support, task orientation, competition, order and organization, rule clarity, teacher control and innovation (Fraser & Fisher, 1983). The Learning Environment Inventory (LEI) and the My Class Inventory (MCI) measure actual classroom environment. The MCI is designed to be completed by children ages eight to 12 years old and only contains five scales as opposed to the LEI which has 12 scales. MCI asks a series of yes and no questions and has been used in only a handful of research studies (Fraser & Fisher, 1983). These tools are included in the Appendix.

The tool that was used to collect quantitative data regarding classroom climate was the ED School Climate Survey (EDSCLS). This survey was created by the U.S. Department of Education and the American Institute for Research. This free-of-charge survey provides districts a platform to gather and present information to stakeholders, which is required by the Every Study Succeeds Act. The EDSCLS collects a wide array of information under the domains of Social Emotional Learning, Engagement, Safety, and Environment. The National Center for Education and Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2017) found that schools which focused on students' social and emotional learning skills improved behavior and academics. Students who feel connected within their school are more likely to be successful academically. Although this survey falls under the umbrella of school climate, the questions are specific to teacher and classroom experiences for students, teachers, and parents. The survey works as a tool to design

classroom and school experiences that will promote and sustain these positive connections.

**Defining and Measuring Intelligence**

The study of intelligence is a current hot topic, drawing the attention of many psychologists. Researchers have argued that the "study of intelligence has proved to be a continuously evolving, dynamic field with the breadth of the field expanding rapidly over the past 25-30 years" (Human Intelligence, 2018, p. X). Spearman (1904) believed that intelligence is created by one quality within the brain, calling the theoretical entity the general factor, or 'g'. His research indicated that despite different characteristics, outside of age, all intelligent behavior comes from mental energy (Spearman, 1904). Contrary to this, Thorndike (1920) was interested in a wide variety of abilities and achievements. He recognized that there are multiple factors that lead to success in individuals. This was further expanded upon in Gardner's 1993 Theory of Multiple Intelligences.

Gardener's most common iteration of the theory of multiple intelligences included the following eight components: logical mathematical, linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, spatial, and naturalistic (Gardener, 1993). Interpersonal intelligence was defined as the "ability to recognize, appreciate, and contend with the feelings, beliefs, and intentions of other people" (p.9). The definition of intrapersonal intelligence takes a more personal perspective in that it looks at how one regulates his or her own life in response to emotions, desires, strengths and/or weaknesses (Gardener, 1993). These two intelligences combine to provide an insight into the development of the theory of emotional intelligence.

**Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) goes beyond cognitive intelligence to include abstract qualities in interpersonal relationships. Salovey and Mayer (1990) first defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions (p. 185). They divided these basic abilities into four components: perceive of sense emotions, use emotion to assist thought, understand emotions, and manage emotions.

Daniel Goleman, a researcher who popularized the term in his book *Emotional Intelligence*, explained that EI is a different way of being smart. He expanded upon the ideas of Salovey and Mayer, finding that the traditional intelligence quotient does not always predict success; instead, there is another factor that can account for successful work performance (Goleman, 1995). "It includes knowing what your feelings are and using feelings to make good decisions in life" (O'Neil, 1996, p. 6). Individuals use their emotional intelligence to manage moods and impulses to remain positive while working toward established goals. EI also includes social skills and relationships with others (O'Neil, 1996). Goleman's model for developing EI includes the five domains of knowing your emotions, managing your own emotions, motivating yourself, recognizing and understanding other people's emotions, and managing relationships. These areas are all able to be explicitly taught.

Emotional intelligence is learned. The brain is malleable, especially during childhood, with the center for emotional response being one of the last parts of the brain to develop; therefore, if students are taught emotional intelligence, they will utilize these strategies the remainder of their lives. This includes children who have learned the wrong

emotional responses; they can learn healthier ways to cope with support from a caring adult, such as a teacher. Goleman believes "schools must teach children how to recognize and manage their emotions, and that educators must model emotional intelligence in caring, respectful interactions with children" (O'Neil, 1996).

Goleman further stated that emotional competencies create caring environments in schools, allowing students and the teacher to feel respected and connected to each other. One of the models of emotional intelligence, the ability model, identifies the logic behind emotions signaling relationships. It looked at how feelings result in reasoning and perceiving emotions. It boasts that emotional intelligence exists and can be considered a traditional intelligence. The second model is referred to as the mixed model in which emotional intelligence is combined with "social competencies, traits, and behaviors, and makes wondrous claims about the success this intelligence leads to" (Cobb & Mayer, 2000, p. 15). Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) organized emotional intelligence into four competencies: Self-Awareness (the ability to understand our own emotions), Self-Management (emotional self-control, positivity, and adaptability), Social Awareness (empathy), and Relationship Management.

### *Measuring Emotional Intelligence*

When determining an individual's emotional intelligence, various instruments have been used over the years, analyzing abilities as is similar to other intelligence testing. "Ability-based testing of emotional intelligence has centered on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and its precursor, the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS)" (Cobb & Mayer, 2000, p. 16). These assessments examine four areas of emotional intelligence: perception, facilitation of thought,

understanding, and management. The scoring of this test differs from other types of assessments in that there are not specific right or wrong answers; instead, a target criteria or consensus approach is used by trained professionals such as psychologists (Cobb & Mayer, 2000).

The Reactions to Teaching Situations (RTS) is a tool specific to teachers that measures emotional intelligence in the classroom. It is designed after the four-branch model of emotional intelligence in which 10 typical teaching situations are presented and the responder selects from four choices aligned with the framework: understanding, identifying, using, or managing emotions (Perry & Ball, 2007).

Bar-On's Emotional Quotient test was designed to assess one's ability to succeed in handling outside demands and pressures. He determined that they were non-cognitive capabilities and skills that needed to be assessed and, therefore, developed a tool for measurement. The test is completed by the individual about his or her self on 133 items with a five-point response scale from very seldom / not true of me to very often / true of me. It includes an "a multifactorial array of interrelated emotional, personal, and social abilities" (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010, p. 427).

The Emotional Social Competency Inventory (2017) was developed by Boyatzis and Goleman in partnership with the Korn Ferry Hay Group. It is designed to measure a specific group of competencies that show strong relationships to outstanding performance for individuals: social and emotional intelligence competencies. The most recent version of the inventory includes data from nearly 80,000 participants, 700,000 non-self raters, and 2,200 organizations. Therefore, the tool has "updated the ESCI global norms, reviewed it psychometric-based properties, and gathered the most recent research so that

practitioners can share the most current findings" (Korn Ferry Group, 2017, p. 1). The ESCI model covers four areas (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management) and 12 competencies (emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, achievement orientation, positive outlook, adaptability, empathy, organizational awareness, influence, coach and mentor, conflict management, inspirational leadership, and teamwork). Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between the four areas.

**Figure 4**

*Four Areas of Emotional Intelligence*


### *Teacher Emotional Intelligence*

A teacher's emotional intelligence and its impact on the classroom environment has been researched. In one quantitative study, Perry and Ball (2007) administered the Reactions to Teaching Situations to 239 primary and secondary teachers in Melbourne, Victoria. The responses to teaching situations (including those with colleagues as well as students) were measured using the four components of the emotional intelligence framework and analyzed to determine how a teacher's emotional intelligence impacts their responses to situations. Perry and Ball found "compelling evidence to support the contention that teachers with high levels of emotional intelligence are much more likely to report identifying, using, understanding, and managing their emotions in both

positively and negatively charged situations" (p. 451). This information deduced that a teacher's emotional intelligence moderates their perception of situations as being positive or negative, thus influencing the response of the teacher. Teachers with low levels of emotional intelligence do not respond constructively to positive or negative situations while those with high levels of emotional intelligence will turn negative situations into positive solutions.

Another quantitative study conducted by Bracket et al. (2010) examined how teachers' emotional regulation ability impacts their job satisfaction and burnout. Bracket et al. (2010) used the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) to assess 123 secondary teachers' emotional regulation ability (ERA). This information was found to be associated positively with positive affect, principal support, job satisfaction, and personal accomplishment. Teachers who have a higher ERA may contribute to greater job satisfaction and feelings of personal accomplishment. It is important to note that within this study, the researchers found that greater support from principals and affect contribute to these factors as well.

One research study explored teacher effectiveness as reported by students. Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) looked closely at the relationship between English as a Foreign Language teachers' emotional quotient (EQ) and their pedagogical success in organizations. Eighty-nine EFL teachers completed Bar-On's EQ test while their students answered questions to evaluate the teachers' performance. The study found that "there was a significant positive relationship between EQ and teachers' success. The size of this correlation indicates that the higher the teachers' EQ, the more likely they are to be successful in their profession" (p. 429).

Teacher engagement in classrooms is linked to emotional intelligence as well. According to a quantitative study conducted by Abiodullah et al. (2020), the level of emotional intelligence of an educator is reflective in the engagement the teacher brings to the classroom. After surveying 320 secondary school teachers, the researchers concluded that "teacher engagement levels are associated with teacher engagement factors. Besides this, teachers' social engagement with students and colleagues is an important dimension for teachers' engagement in the classroom," (p. 138). They further recommended providing opportunities for co-curricular activities for the emotional well-being of all stakeholders.

Teacher emotional intelligence can be taught. Jones et al. (2013) claimed "practices and policies to support and foster educators' social and emotional competencies are fundamental to addressing these challenges" (p. 62). It is incorrect to assume that all teachers naturally possess high levels of emotional intelligence; instead, a school culture should reflect the realization that social emotional skills must be explicitly taught and coached to both students and teachers. Teachers today are more stressed and burnt out of their profession compared to other professions. Teachers with higher SEL skills have strong relationships with students, effective classroom management, and SEL embedded into the classroom. It creates a positive loop, transferring positivity from teachers to students in a cycle. The same is true of teachers with lower SEL skills; the negativity is transferred among all parties included (Jones et al., 2013).

### *Emotional Intelligence in Classroom Instruction*

A popular trend is the inclusion of emotional instruction in the classroom. It has been labeled as character education, soft skills, social emotional skills, and emotional

instruction. Cobb and Mayer (2000) suggest that when children perceive emotional intelligence, they are making sense of the world around them. Therefore, an ability-based approach to instruction on emotional knowledge and emotional reasoning will better equip students for making sensible decisions. Cobb and Mayer (2000) cite that as educators infuse emotional intelligence models into the curriculum, an "ability-based curriculum, which emphasizes emotional knowledge and reasoning, may have advantages because it reaches more students" (p. 18).

Social emotional learning includes emotional intelligence, social competence and self-regulation (Jones et al., 2013). These skills, when woven into the daily life of the school by all stakeholders, will benefit the overall culture as well as the academic achievement of students. Jones et al. (2013) claimed SEL that is practiced daily builds emotional awareness, incorporates reflection into daily practice, tackles professional and personal stress, and creates a culture of regular learning and improvement.

Teachers greatly influence the classroom environment, specifically in regard to their own emotional intelligence. "Teachers with high ERA also may feel greater personal accomplishment because ERA likely contributes to the establishment of warm, caring relationships, the ability to deal effectively with student problems, and the creation of a relaxing classroom atmosphere, to the extent that it enhances positive emotions and preempts conflict and tension" (Brackett et al., 2010). Additionally, emotions and perceptions influence teaching practices, which implies that teacher EI is critical in the process of teaching (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010). Jones et al. (2013) posit research has shown "Social and emotional competencies influence everything from teacher-student

relationships to classroom management to effective instruction to teacher burnout" (p. 62).

Jones et al. (2013) claimed "teachers' SEL abilities likely influence their classroom organization and management" (p. 63). This is created when a teacher is calm, includes effective behavior management techniques, and provides opportunities for creativity and student decision-making in their learning and environment. Mutually respected relationships with all stakeholders is also a critical part of the classroom (Jones et al., 2013).

### *Poverty and Emotional Intelligence*

Students living in poverty should especially be supported in the classroom, and teachers with stronger EI are in a better position to do so. A consensus study report issued by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicines found that "poor children develop weaker language, memory, and self-regulation skills than their peers" (2019). It goes on to state that programs designed to alleviate poverty improve child well-being. In this report, one of the major factors that policy makers and program administrators should consider when designing and implementing anti-poverty programs is equitable and ready access to programs and high quality teachers. Although the report mostly focused on financial relief programs, an awareness in buildings and classrooms can mitigate effects on children.

Living in poverty has a psychological impact on the poor. One research study compared poor before and after debt relief. Their findings presented a greater improvement in cognitive functioning, reduced anxiety, and lessened bias (Ong et al., 2019). They recommend alleviating mental burdens as a solution to improve

psychological functioning and decision-making in the poor. It is critical to lessen the gap between disadvantaged youth due to its link to adult physical morbidity and mortality (Evans, 2016). “Adults from low-income families manifest more allostatic load, an index of chronic physiological stress, higher levels of externalizing symptoms but not internalizing symptoms, and more helplessness behaviors” (Evans, 2016, p. 52). This also applies to the educational settings. NAP, A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty (2019) found evidence that a child growing up below the poverty line has worse outcomes in every dimension, including educational attainment, risky behaviors, and delinquency. They further claim that reducing poverty may lesson parent stress and improve emotional support and interactions with children.

**Summary**

This literature review presented research on classroom environment and emotional intelligence. The findings indicate that teacher emotional intelligence influences the classroom environment. Most of the studies included in this literature review centered on emotional intelligence and academic achievement. The literature on emotional intelligence and classroom environment was primarily surrounding preschool or undergraduate settings. The one dissertation that focused on emotional intelligence and the classroom environment included participants at the secondary level. To the best of the researcher’s knowledge, there are no studies that examine teacher EI in elementary schools. This research attempts to fill that gap.

## Chapter 3: Methodology

Literature recognizes that teacher emotional intelligence influences classroom climate which influences student success. Therefore, how teacher emotional intelligence affects classroom climate is important. Teacher development continues to evolve through teacher preparation programs and professional development opportunities provided by school organizations. By including coursework focused on emotional intelligence through these types of activities, the construction of the classroom environment will be rooted in deeper meaning.

The research model was inspired by a dissertation examining the principal as the architect of school culture in the same district. A school's climate is closely connected to the classroom climate. A school's climate can influence student achievement, teacher morale, and discipline (National School Climate Council, 2007). The classroom, which is a microcosm of the school, can do the same. Triangulating data surrounding Goleman's Emotional Intelligence model and perceptions of positive school climate within the same district as utilized in this study, Runkle (2020) found a relationship between the two. Conversely, the research revealed a negative impact on school climate when principal emotional intelligence was low. This research study is designed to complement Runkle's (2020) research on principal emotional intelligence and how it effects the school as a whole by focusing to how teacher emotional intelligence affects individual classroom climate. Data for both research studies was gathered from a school climate survey which was administered in the same district in November 2019.

The researcher used a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and interviews to triangulate data regarding the emotional intelligence of fourth grade teachers in Garden

School District and its impact on fourth-grade classrooms. There were seven buildings that were examined within the district. Within each building two fourth-grade classrooms and the respective teachers were explored. Data was gathered from teachers, students, and principals in order to gain multiple perspectives on the climate of each classroom.

**Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship, if any, between fourth-grade elementary classroom teachers' emotional intelligence and classroom climate. The following research questions lead this investigation:

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the emotional intelligence of the teacher and their classroom climate?
2. What are the teacher, student, and administrator perceptions of the teacher's emotional intelligence?
3. What are the administrator, teacher, and student perceptions of the classroom climate?

The researcher was hopeful that this research study would contribute to the body of research surrounding teacher emotional intelligence and classroom climate.

**Methodology**

The researcher took the following steps to provide a rich, detailed, and triangulated understanding of teacher emotional intelligence as it pertains to classroom climate. Using a mixed methods approach to gathering data, the research findings can be conclusive. This is a systematic way of using two research methods to answer the research questions which often produces results that have a broader and more significant impact than research that only uses one method (Morse & Niehaus, 2009).

The first focus of this study was to gather qualitative data to review, analyze, and summarize based on the quantitative data from the teacher and student responses in the ED School Climate Survey (EDSLCLS) for the schools within Garden School District that are participating in the study. The next phase was to gather quantitative data regarding teacher emotional intelligence by providing a self-administered survey to each participating teacher. This was distributed to teachers in the summer of 2021. The teachers took the Emotional Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) which is included in the Appendix. Based on the researcher's review of instruments, the ESCI appeared to be the most thorough and detailed inventory through which to gather data about teacher EI. Furthermore, Dr. Richard Boyatzis, Distinguished Professor of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University and a co-creator of the instrument together with Dr. Daniel Goleman, was contacted regarding the instrument's use in this study. Dr. Boyatzis confirmed that the ESCI is an appropriate instrument to use in this study to assess teacher EI. Additionally, teachers also were asked to provide information briefly regarding their demographics and credentials, which provided more context to the findings. Finally, it is noteworthy that the data collection process and instruments used to collect data in this study will be the same as used by Runkle (2020) in his study of principal EI in the same (Garden) school district. It was hoped that this double layer of research at both the building and classroom levels would be helpful to the Garden School District.

The third phase included a qualitative descriptive case study methodology to capture the use of emotional intelligence as it relates to classroom climate in these classrooms. The case study approach to the research provided the researcher with an in-

depth examination of this particular organization. This approach was strategically chosen because it looks at typical classrooms to determine the phenomena that are occurring. The case study utilized multiple participants with diverse experiences and perspectives. According to Saldana (2011), by utilizing multiple cases and perspective, a richer context is established. Although the researcher intended to use observations to inform the study further, due to circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and precautions set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Health, this was not permitted. Although it would be possible to conduct observations in the virtual classroom, this research is specific to face-to-face classroom interactions.

Specific to this research, the study employed a case research approach to describe "the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomena as described by participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). The case study provided an in-depth analysis of the process the individuals take to design their classroom climate. During the summer of 2021, the researcher interviewed participants in a semi-structured format that aimed at deducing each teacher's emotional intelligence level and his or her approach to classroom design, including its management and procedures. The researcher also conducted interviews with administrators about the climate in the classrooms of the subject teachers based in The Danielson Framework which identifies Domain 2 as The Classroom Environment, drawing on previous observations conducted in the supervision and evaluation plan derived from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)'s Teacher Effectiveness System in Act 82 of 2012. Both interviews followed an open-ended structure. Open-ended questions provided researchers with an opportunity to explore a topic and allowed the participants to navigate through the questioning (Seidman, 2013).

## Participants and Sampling

Garden School District was chosen as the location for this study as the researcher had access to both subject participants and the recently administered school climate survey. Additionally, it was the site of Runkle's (2020) study on principal EI. The district was willing to provide the researcher access to the data collected from the survey instrument as well as the individuals participating in the research interviews. Participants in this study were identified through purposive sampling. Only fourth-grade teachers during the 2019-2020 school year in schools in the Garden School District were invited to participate. This was because the EDSCLS was administered in November of 2019 and only fourth- and fifth-grade students participated; additionally, all instructional and non-instructional staff were asked to complete the survey. Fifth-grade teachers and students will not be utilized because the fifth-grade survey followed a more intermediate questioning plan while the fourth-grade survey encompassed the elementary experience (which was also more akin to Runkle's 2020 study).

An email was sent to the 14 fourth-grade teachers in the seven elementary schools of interest inviting them to participate in the study. Each teacher completed the ESCI along with a short survey (Appendix A) that collect basic demographic information on the individual and their classroom. Additionally, an email was sent to the administrator of each school identified inviting them to participate in an interview.

## Procedural Data Collection

### *School Climate Survey*

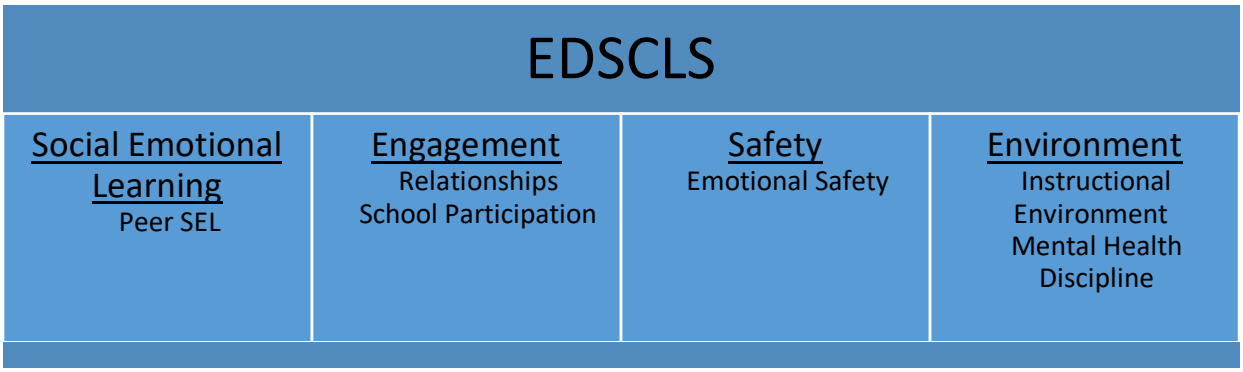
In November 2019, Garden School District administered the U.S. Department of Education School Climate Survey (EDSCLS) to students in grades 4-12, parents,

instructional and non-instructional staff. Students in grades four and five completed the survey while in school. The results of this survey were available for the researcher's review. The survey data gathered from the adults was connected to each specific school, which allowed the researcher to analyze components related to the schools and, in turn, the teachers. Only the results from the students was utilized in this study as they were the subjects of interest in the research.

The EDSCLS gathered a wide array of information under the domains of Social Emotional Learning, Engagement, Safety, and Environment; however, only certain components within those domains were relevant to this research (see Figure 4). These included peer SEL (student only), Relationships, School Participation, Emotional Safety and Mental Health. The National Center for Education and Evaluation and Regional Assistance (2017) found that schools that focused on students' social and emotional learning skills showed an improvement in both behavior and academics. Students who felt connected within their school were more likely to be successful academically. An earlier report presented by the National Center for Education Statistics (2012) found a link between students' participation in school activities and higher academic achievement. The Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality published a report by Hedden et al. (2017) that recognized the link between poor mental health among students and negative academic outcomes. The National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth found a connection to how discipline is handled and its impact on the student-learning environment. Instructional staff as well as student responses were available to the researcher.

**Figure 5**

*Domains of the School Climate Survey*

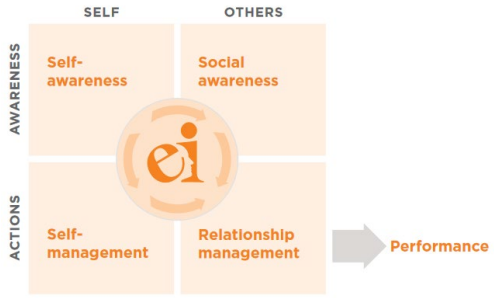



***Emotional Intelligence Inventory***

The next phase of the study utilized a survey administered to teachers. It gauged teacher emotional intelligence using the Emotional Social Competency Inventory (2017) which was developed by Boyatzis and Goleman in partnership with the Korn Ferry Hay Group. It was designed to measure a specific group of competencies that show strong relationships to outstanding performance for individuals: social and emotional intelligence competencies. The ESCI model covered four areas (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management) and 12 competencies (emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control, achievement orientation, positive outlook, adaptability, empathy, organizational awareness, influence, coach and mentor, conflict management, inspirational leadership, and teamwork). See Figure 5. The survey focused on these 12 aspects by asking participants to rank statements from never to consistently. There were 68 items within the survey that were piloted and reviewed by the creators and in previous studies; many of the items were reverse-scored as well. The ESCI data was gathered through the Korn Ferry online platform.

**Figure 6**

*Four Areas of Emotional Intelligence*




***Interviews***

The third and fourth phases of this study involved one-on-one interviews with the fourth-grade teachers and school principals. The interview questions were derived from components of Domain 2: The Classroom Environment and Goleman's model for developing EQ, which included five elements (self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, and social skills). The Danielson Framework (2007) identified Domain 2 as The Classroom Environment. It included the components of creating an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, and organizing physical space.

Interview questions included:

**Teacher Interview Questions.**

1. Describe your classroom environment.
2. To what do you attribute this environment?
3. How do you create an environment of respect and rapport in your classroom?
4. How do you establish a culture for learning?
5. How do you establish and maintain classroom procedures?
6. Describe your student behavior management approach.
7. How do you organize the physical space of your classroom?
8. Describe how you perceive and manage your own emotions in the classroom.

9. Describe how you manage your students' emotions in the classroom.
10. How do you work to build and maintain relationships among your students?
11. How do you read the emotional pulse of your students?
12. What motivates you and how do you use it to grow?

**Principal Interview Questions.**

1. Describe *teacher's* classroom environment.
2. To what do you attribute to this environment?
3. How does *teacher* create an environment of respect and rapport in the classroom?
4. How does *teacher* establish a culture for learning?
5. How does *teacher* establish and maintain classroom procedures?
6. Describe *teacher's* student behavior management approach.
7. Describe the physical space of the classroom and how it is utilized.
8. Describe *teacher's* perception and management of his/her emotions.
9. Describe *teacher's* management of student emotions.
10. How does *teacher* work to build and maintain relationships among the students?
11. Describe how *teacher* reads the emotional pulse of the students.
12. In your opinion, what motivates *teacher* and how does he or she grow as an educator?

**Interview Protocol.**

The following procedures guided the interview protocol:

1. Explained purpose to interviewees prior to the interview.

2. Contacted participants to secure a convenient time for the interview.
3. Ensured the participants were at ease by holding informal conversation prior to the start of the interview.
4. The researcher thanked the participant and reminded them of the participatory nature of the interview.
5. The researcher explained that if the participant was in agreement, (a) the interview will be recorded and transcribed, (b) the participant will have access to the transcript of their interview for the purpose of ensuring accuracy, and (c) the participant may request changes to any of their comments or request that any statements be withdrawn and not used in the data set.
6. Participants were asked if they have any questions about the study or the interview prior to beginning the interview.
7. The researcher provided the Participant Consent Form to be read and signed by the participant.
8. Any questions or uncertainties were addressed by the researcher.
9. The interviews were recorded with permission of the interviewees.
10. Interviews were limited to 60 minutes.
11. At the close of the interview, the research thanked the participant and reminded them that transcripts will be available for review prior to the publication of the research.

**Member Checking.**

At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher made copies of the interview transcripts of both the teacher and principal participants. They were afforded an

opportunity to make any additional comments or redactions after viewing the preliminary results of the data.

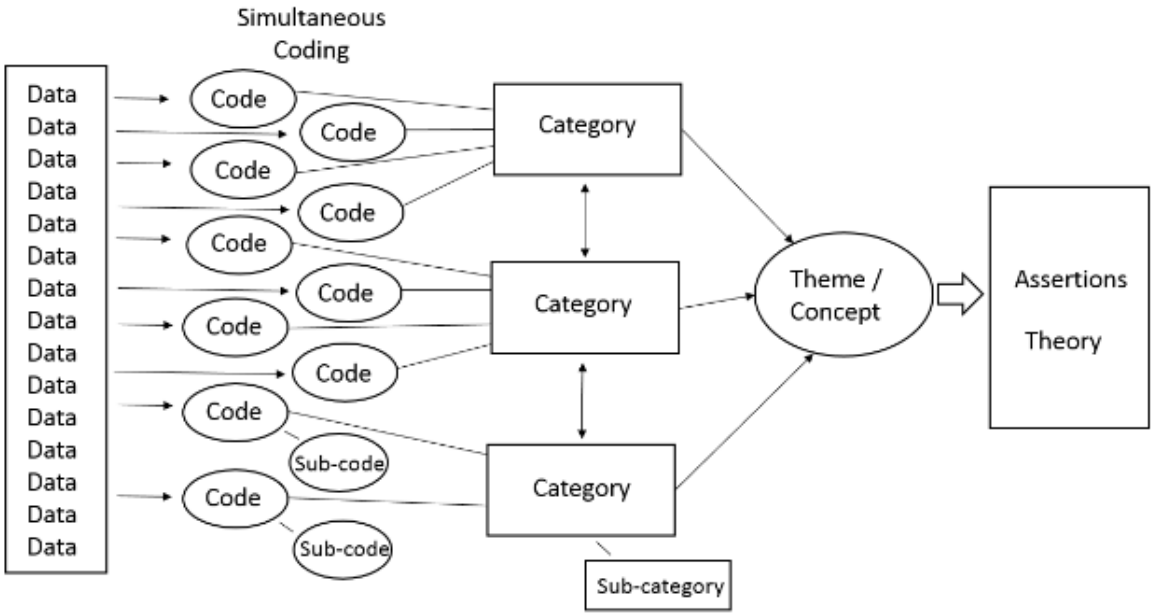
**Data Analysis**

Using a mixed-methods approach to the research, this study included qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions. The researcher gathered information from the teachers and administrators on their perceptions of classroom environment and emotional intelligence to provide context for the survey information provided. The researcher collected quantitative data on specific questions targeting classroom climate from the EDSCLS and summarized the responses from students. Using the EDSCLS student survey results and the results from the self-administered emotional intelligence survey, the researcher delved deeply into the interview responses within both roles with alike and non-alike groups to determine consistent themes in the information.

Qualitative data was gathered through individual interviews with both the teachers and the principals. The researcher used Zoom as the platform to conduct the meetings. Within the Zoom settings, there was an option to record and transcribe interviews. This provided printed transcripts for an inductive thematic analysis. The patterns, or frequent mentions of ideas, were discovered in the transcripts through the process of coding. Coding is an act in interpretation that summarizes, distills, or condenses data to calculate meaning (Saldana, 2011). By starting with the reality of the data and progressing toward the thematic, conceptual, and theoretical, the researcher was able to consolidate the data into overarching categories (see Figure 7). This was done through cycles of coding which aided the researcher in making connections between and among the data.

**Figure 7**

*A Streamlined Codes-To-Theory Model for Qualitative Inquiry*




The coding method that was used was In Vivo, or natural coding (Saldana, 2011). As this study attempted to capture the meaning in the participants' experiences, the In Vivo method was the most appropriate. First, the researcher organized the text of the transcripts by segmenting concepts as much as possible with spaces between shifts in ideas. This was difficult since dialogue was not necessarily sequential or chunked by topic; however, an attempt was made to organize ideas. Next, the researcher increased the margins of the transcripts to provide space to code ideas in the right-hand margin. Once the physical text was organized, the researcher laid out all of the transcripts to begin the first cycle of coding. The written transcripts from the participants revealed codes by citing actual terms from the participants. Pre-coding was used to get an overall understanding of what some of the codes might be. Each transcript was read through and ideas were noted in the margins. Next, the researcher noted significant moments within the dialogue by highlighting, circling, or underlining the text. Various highlighter colors

were used to color-code pieces of data based on themes and categories. The themes that emerged were typed into Microsoft Word to form an outline. Themes were supported by quotes, examples, and comments.

Using a table (Appendix C), information gathered from the interviews was cross-referenced with components of the ESCI and the EDSCLS. The themes and concepts that emerged from the qualitative data were used to answer the posed research questions.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the emotional intelligence of fourth-grade teachers in Garden School District (pseudonym) and the relationship, if any, to the classroom climate. The following research questions guided this study:

1. What relationship, if any, exists between the emotional intelligence of the teacher and their classroom climate?
2. What are the teacher, student, and administrator perceptions of the teacher's emotional intelligence?
3. What are the administrator, teacher, and student perceptions of the classroom climate?

The study utilized four phases of data collection to answer the research questions listed. The first phase of the study was to review, analyze, and summarize the quantitative data from the students' responses to the ED School Climate Survey (EDSCLS). The second phase of the study focused on gathering quantitative data on each teacher's emotional intelligence through the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory (ESCI) instrument. The third phase of the study employed qualitative interviews of 11 of the district's fourth-grade teachers and their principals regarding climate in each teacher's classroom. In this final phase of the study, the researcher first interviewed each teacher to gain their perspective on the climate and management of emotions in their classroom. Then, the researcher interviewed the building principal of each teacher to provide an additional perspective on the teacher's emotional intelligence and classroom climate.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyze the data collected through surveys and interviews. The data will be presented in the phrases described above and by

school. Through the triangulation of this quantitative and qualitative data across tools and participants, patterns emerged. The findings from this chapter were utilized to create the recommendations provided in Chapter Five.

## Phase 1: Climate Survey Results

In the fall of 2019, Garden School District administered the ED School Climate Survey (EDSCLS) to all students, parents, support staff, and instructional staff. The purpose of administering this survey was to gain insights from all valued stakeholders about school climate. The tool was developed by the U.S. Department of Education and utilized as a tool to measure school climate and provide feedback to Garden School District administrators. The survey questions were categorized into four sections: Social Emotional Learning, Engagement, Safety, and Environment. Data relevant to classroom climate and teacher emotional intelligence were pulled from these sections for the purpose of this study. Furthermore, only responses generated by students were explored for a broader context and understanding of how the students view their classroom and how their classroom may be connected to the actions of the teacher. The students' perceptions are valued as they are most closely in tune with the behaviors of the teacher.

### *Survey Results*

The data presented in this section provide the responses to the survey questions organized by school building. Each school's data are discussed followed by a table that illustrates survey prompts and student responses. Tables 2-7 list the prompts connected to classroom climate and teacher emotional intelligence. The responses all use the same key to communicate these results (C = Completely True, M = Mostly True, L = A Little True, and N = Not True). The student responses are recorded in percentages, not numbers.

Therefore, the analysis below provides an overview of the positive or negative classroom climate, not a definitive rating for the classroom. The conclusions are solely those of the researcher.

### *Lilac Elementary School*

Lilac Elementary School is home to Teacher 1 (T1). At the time the survey was administered, there were three fourth-grade teachers and 92 fourth-grade students, averaging 30 students in each classroom. Ninety-one students completed the survey.

Overall the survey results displayed students' strong belief that the classroom climate in the reported areas is positive. In each category, 53-99% of participants indicated the statement was completely true or mostly true. The mean of favorable responses was 86.2%, making Lilac Elementary School the fourth highest of the participating schools with positive responses. The highest percentage of positive responses fell in the "My teachers care about me," "My teachers are happy when I work hard in school," and "My teachers make me feel good about myself." The lowest number of favorable responses were indicated in the stem, "My teachers let students help decide class rules" and "My teachers let students help decide class activities."

The data presented also demonstrates some contrast. Although the students feel loved and cared for, they do not have as much say in the decision making in the classroom. By law, teachers are evaluated on their performance. This specific district utilizes the Danielson framework. A consistent attribute of the distinguished teacher is the presence of student choice and ownership in the classroom. The data presented indicates a need for teachers to empower students when it comes to decision making in the classroom.

**Table 2**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Lilac Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 37 | 32 | 26 | 5 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 35 | 18 | 27 | 20 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 58 | 25 | 15 | 2 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 70 | 18 | 9 | 3 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 87 | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 68 | 21 | 8 | 3 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 73 | 25 | 2 | 0 |
| My teachers care about me. | 90 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 85 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 71 | 22 | 6 | 1 |

### *Rose Elementary School*

Teacher 2 works at Rose Elementary School. At the time the survey was administered there were 64 fourth-grade students and three fourth-grade teachers. The average class size was 21.33. Fifty-seven students participated in the survey.

Rose Elementary School was tied as the third highest number of average favorable responses, indicating an overall positive classroom climate. The three highest percentages of favorable responses were linked to the questions “My teachers are happy when I worked hard in school,” “My teachers care about me,” “My teachers expect me to do my best all the time,” and “Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions.” The highest number of ‘not true’ responses fell in the

"My teachers let students help decide class rules" category. However, Rose Elementary School had the highest percentage of favorable responses of all of the schools in Garden School District. This information suggests a strong positive relationship among the teachers and the students in this learning environment with a focus on student choice.

Although the responses were favorable, a relative need still exists in the areas of student choice and control of the learning environment. The students feel loved, cared for, and appreciated for their hard work; however, they do not have decision-making power when it comes to rules or an involvement in the class discussions or activities. Again, this data presents an opportunity for teachers to engage students in the activities and structure within the classroom.

**Table 3**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Rose Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 69 | 18 | 29 | 2 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 43 | 21 | 21 | 15 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 54 | 33 | 11 | 2 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 67 | 14 | 12 | 7 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 82 | 14 | 2 | 2 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 58 | 28 | 7 | 7 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 70 | 19 | 8 | 3 |
| My teachers care about me. | 82 | 9 | 3 | 2 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 70 | 21 | 5 | 4 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 67 | 24 | 7 | 2 |

### *Tulip Elementary School*

Teachers 3 and 4 serve the fourth-grade students at Tulip Elementary School. At the time of the survey, there were four fourth-grade teachers in the grade level, averaging a class size of 26. Of the 104 total students, 93 of them were participants.

Overall, the survey results indicated a positive classroom climate related to teacher interactions. Of the 93 participant responses, 87.6% were favorable, making Tulip Elementary School the school with the second highest percentage of favorable responses. With that said, a relative area of weakness is in student choice with only 68% of students feeling they can help decide rules and 74% stating they can decide class activities. Conversely, 97% of students have positive responses indicating they feel their teachers care about them and are happy when they work hard in school, and 96% believe their teachers expect them to do their best all of the time.

As stated in the previous two schools, the relative need again lies in student voice and choice. Teachers are providing students with a caring, nurturing environment; however, they are not allowing students to decide class activities or the rules that govern behavior.

**Table 4**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Tulip Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 30 | 34 | 32 | 4 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 44 | 24 | 21 | 11 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 61 | 24 | 14 | 1 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 66 | 18 | 10 | 6 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 83 | 14 | 3 | 0 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 72 | 19 | 7 | 2 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 61 | 33 | 4 | 2 |
| My teachers care about me. | 63 | 34 | 2 | 1 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 81 | 15 | 3 | 1 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 54 | 36 | 8 | 2 |

### *Orchid Elementary School*

At the time of the survey, Teachers 5 and 6 taught at Orchid Elementary School. There were 87 fourth-grade students among four teachers, making the class size average 29. Of the 87 students, 78 of them participated in the school climate survey.

With a mean score of 86.3% favorable responses to the 10 areas of reporting, Orchid Elementary score was tied as the third school with the most favorable responses. 99% of the students have favorable responses for three categories: “My teachers are happy when I work hard in school,” “My teachers make me feel good about myself,” and “My teachers care about me.” It also had the lowest percentage of ‘not at all’ responses in four of the categories. Conversely, Orchid Elementary School had the lowest number of positive responses for “My teachers let students help decide class rules.” Compared to all of the other schools that participated in the school climate survey. Orchid Elementary had the second highest percentage of favorable responses in the category, “I feel like I belong at this school.”

The survey results indicate a strong connection between the students and the school yet the students had the least amount of control over class activities and rules when compared to the other buildings. This is a surprising contrast that shows students do not necessarily feel loved and cared for when they are given more responsibility and control over their environment. Is this a perception that is rooted in students by teachers and parents? Is the idea of control over another person also a feeling of comfort and security?

**Table 5**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Orchid Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 22 | 39 | 34 | 5 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 13 | 33 | 27 | 27 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 57 | 29 | 9 | 5 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 60 | 31 | 5 | 4 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 87 | 12 | 1 | 0 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 61 | 27 | 8 | 4 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 72 | 27 | 0 | 1 |
| My teachers care about me. | 89 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 69 | 20 | 6 | 5 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 55 | 40 | 4 | 1 |

### *Daisy Elementary School*

Teachers 7 and 8 were fourth-grade teachers at Daisy Elementary School along with one other grade level team member. At the time of the survey, there were 79 fourth-grade students resulting in a classroom average of 26.33.

Daisy Elementary School had the highest average of favorable responses across all reporting categories when compared to the other schools participating in the school climate survey. 99% of the students had favorable responses in the following items: “My teachers make me feel good about myself,” “My teachers care about me,” and “Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions.” The last statement was the highest among all of the other participating schools, with the second highest of the other schools having a 93% favorable rate. 91% of students responded favorable to “I feel like I belong at this school,” making Daisy Elementary School the highest in that category.

The responses to the survey are similar to the other buildings in that students feel cared for yet they do not have many opportunities to decide class rules or class activities.

The very favorable response to adults helping students learn how to control their feelings indicates that this is a strength of the school. Additionally, Daisy Elementary School had the highest favorable responses in the prompt "I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me." A closer look at what this building does to promote self-awareness, social emotional learning, and relationship building would help to see why this percentage is so high in comparison to the other buildings.

**Table 6**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Daisy Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 43 | 35 | 18 | 4 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 32 | 26 | 21 | 21 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 42 | 35 | 18 | 5 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 67 | 25 | 3 | 5 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 87 | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 76 | 16 | 5 | 3 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 76 | 23 | 0 | 1 |
| My teachers care about me. | 92 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 84 | 12 | 1 | 3 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 81 | 18 | 1 | 0 |

### *Daffodil Elementary School*

Daffodil Elementary School housed 102 fourth-grade students and four fourth-grade teachers making the class average 25.5. Teacher 9 was one of those fourth-grade teachers. Ninety-two students participated in the survey.

Daffodil Elementary School had the lowest percentage of positive responses on the statements pulled for this study with a mean of 81%. Specifically, the responses related to "My teachers care about me" was 93% favorable, "My teachers make me feel

good about myself" was 81% favorable, and "I feel like I belong at this school" was 86% favorable. Teacher expectations are perceived to be high by the students with 97% of the students indicating a positive response to "My teachers expect me to do my best all the time" which was the highest percentage in this area across all of the other elementary schools participating in the survey.

The survey responses indicate a relative negative classroom environment and utilization of emotional intelligence. Many of the students do not completely agree that the teacher makes them feel good about themselves or a sense of belonging to the school. The survey data is not broken down by classroom, which is a limitation. Only one of the four teachers that make up the survey results participating in the interview. These results make up only a quarter of the responses.

**Table 7**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Daffodil Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 32 | 26 | 18 | 14 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 50 | 16 | 13 | 21 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 44 | 40 | 11 | 5 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 49 | 26 | 13 | 12 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 82 | 10 | 7 | 1 |
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 59 | 23 | 14 | 4 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 47 | 34 | 16 | 3 |
| My teachers care about me. | 67 | 26 | 6 | 1 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 77 | 20 | 2 | 1 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 54 | 28 | 13 | 5 |

### *Poppy Elementary School*

At the time of the survey, Poppy Elementary School had 140 fourth-grade students and five fourth-grade teachers. The class average was 28. Two of those fourth-grade teachers are teachers 10 and 11. One hundred thirty-two students participated in the school climate survey.

Poppy Elementary School ranks as the fifth highest average percentage of favorable responses. The highest responses came from "My teachers care about me," "My teachers are happy when I work hard in school," and "My teachers make me feel good about myself." No categories had 0% responses in the "not at all true" column. This could be due to the overall number of participants, which is greatly higher than the other participating schools. Poppy Elementary School had the highest percentage of favorable responses in the "My teachers let students help decide class rules" category.

The data is similar to the other buildings in that a large percentage of students feel cared for and appreciated for the hard work that they do. Yet there is still a need for students to have more choice in their class activities. Some students do feel that they have a say in the decision making of class rules. A closer look at what the fourth-grade teachers are doing to engage student in the rule making process would be valuable.

**Table 8**

*Summary of EDSCLS Responses for Poppy Elementary School*

| Model | C | M | L | N |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 30 | 39 | 23 | 8 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 48 | 29 | 18 | 7 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 51 | 25 | 18 | 6 |
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 65 | 21 | 8 | 6 |
| My teachers are happy when I work hard in school. | 84 | 10 | 4 | 2 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 58 | 27 | 8 | 7 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 74 | 20 | 5 | 1 |
| My teachers care about me. | 85 | 10 | 4 | 1 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 75 | 16 | 5 | 4 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 56 | 30 | 10 | 4 |

***Summary***

Across all of the schools, there was a very similar pattern. Responses to prompts one, two, and three demonstrate a lack of opportunity for students to be leaders of their own learning. Students feel they are not being given chances to help decide class activities, rules, and discussion. This goes against the highest level of teacher performance in the Danielson rubric. Specifically, Danielson asserts that the highest level of teaching (distinguished) involves teachers giving students the opportunity to be leaders of their own learning. Student responses in this survey indicate more of a tendency for teaching in the proficient range in these attributes. While being proficient is commendable, students benefit to a greater extent from teachers who have distinguished practices.

In contrast, the responses to prompts four, five, seven, and eight demonstrate that students feel a sense of belonging, and goodwill and towards themselves from the teachers. Specifically, they feel that they can go to adults in the school to discuss concerns and feel that the adult cares. Furthermore, the adult responses indicate that teachers care about helping the students to develop control of their feelings and actions and to do their best work.

Table 9 draws attention to the patterns across buildings. The table houses the average favorable responses to each prompt separated by each building. Looking at the

chart, the similarities among the schools can be identified. Most of the buildings had 68-69% favorable responses to "My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class rules." Poppy was an outlier with 78% favorable responses. On the opposite side of the spectrum, Orchid had the lowest percentage of favorable responses with 61%. Poppy Elementary raises above all the other buildings with 76% favorable responses to "My teachers let students help decide class rules." The other buildings averages are between 45-68% favorable with Orchid, again, having the lowest percentage. It is interesting to note that Orchid has the lowest percentage of students who are economically disadvantaged.

The percentages continue to raise with "I have lots of chances to be part of class discussion or activities." Students had favorable responses ranging from 76% to 88% with Rose Elementary having the highest percentage. This building had the highest percentage of students who were identified as economically disadvantaged. The next prompt about belonging to school has a more significant difference in range with 92% of the students at Daisy elementary feeling this way while 76% at Daffodil were in agreement. Furthermore, Daffodil was lower than its fellow schools in the area of students' perspective on if their teachers make them feel good about themselves, care about them, and help them control their feelings and actions.

**Table 9**

*Building Summary of EDSCLS Student Responses*

| Model | L | R | T | O | D | Df | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities. | 69 | 69 | 63 | 61 | 78 | 68 | 69 |
| My teachers let students help decide class rules. | 53 | 64 | 68 | 45 | 58 | 66 | 76 |
| I have lots of chances to be part of class discussions or activities. | 84 | 88 | 85 | 86 | 77 | 83 | 76 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel like I belong at this school. | 88 | 81 | 83 | 91 | 92 | 76 | 86 |
| I can talk to a teacher or another adult at this school about something that is bothering me. | 89 | 86 | 91 | 88 | 92 | 82 | 85 |
| My teachers make me feel good about myself. | 98 | 88 | 94 | 99 | 99 | 81 | 94 |
| My teachers care about me. | 99 | 95 | 98 | 99 | 99 | 93 | 95 |
| My teachers expect me to do my best all the time. | 92 | 91 | 96 | 89 | 96 | 97 | 91 |
| Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions. | 93 | 91 | 90 | 95 | 99 | 82 | 86 |

The interview analysis in the subsequent section of this chapter provides insight into how and why teachers establish routines, build relationships, and promote emotional learning which add perspective to the above findings. It will look at what the teachers do to make them feel good about themselves. They will take a close look at what Daisy Elementary does to build student's social emotional awareness as well as relationships between adults and students. The researcher will take a close look at Poppy Elementary School's rule making process as it has the highest percentage of favorable responses when compared to the other buildings. It is important to note, again, that Daffodil only had one of the four fourth-grade teachers participate in the interviews. Therefore, the data from the student responses may not connect to the responses of the teacher or principal participant.

**Phase Two: ESCI Survey Results**

The Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) is a tool to measure 12 competencies related to performance at work. It surveys individual's perceptions of their behavior specific to emotional intelligence. The research tool was provided by Korn Ferry, the company that manages the survey, after a written request by the researcher. Although the research version provided a 360 tool to gather additional perspectives of the participants, the researcher determined it would be a deterrent to participation and did not

use additional raters. Therefore, this study only reports the perspectives of the teachers' views of their own emotional intelligence. The results were reported by Korn Ferry, which did not provide demographic information in the research version; therefore, this information is not included in the teachers' information.

The survey consisted of 68 statements that asked the participants to rate their response based on their own practice. They were given a five-point scale with a range of values: never, rarely, sometimes, often, or consistently. These results were averaged and contribute to one of the 12 competencies (Hay Group, 2011). Participants completed the survey through an online portal which was emailed to them through the company. The results were shared with the researcher and summarized in Table 10 below.

There are 12 competencies that make up the column titles. Emotional Self-Awareness refers to the recognition of how the participants' emotions affect performance. Emotional Self-Control is how participants keep disruptive emotions and impulses in check. Adaptability is the ability to handle change. Achievement Orientation captures how an individual strives to meet or exceed a standard of excellence. Positive Outlook is the persistence in pursing goals despite obstacles and setbacks. Empathy is how one senses others' feelings and perspectives. Organizational Awareness refers to reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships. Influence captures how an individual has a positive impact on others. Coach and Mentor represents how the participants takes an active interest in others' develop needs and supports their abilities. Conflict Management is the ability to negotiate and resolve conflict. Team Work shows how the individuals works with others towards a shared goal. Inspirational Leadership refers to the ability to inspire and guide individuals and groups.

**Table 10**

*Summary of ESCI Participant Results*

| | T 1 | T 2 | T 3 | T 4 | T 5 | T 6 | T 7 | T 8 | T 9 | T 10 | T 11 | Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Achievement | 4.7 | 5 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 | | 4.2 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4 | 4 | 4.56 |
| Adaptability | 3.7 | 4.5 | 4 | 4.2 | 4.5 | | 4.3 | 4 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 3.7 | 4.2 |
| Conflict Management | 4 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 5 | | 4.8 | 4.4 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.25 |
| Coach and Mentor | 4.8 | 5 | 3.7 | 3.8 | 4.7 | | 5 | 4.5 | 4.2 | 3.3 | 3.7 | 4.17 |
| Empathy | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4 | 4.6 | 4.2 | | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4 | 4.18 |
| Emotional Self Awareness | 3.7 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 4.2 | 4.5 | | 4.2 | 4.7 | 3.8 | 3.5 | 4 | 4.07 |
| Emotional Self Control | 3.8 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 4.5 | | 4 | 3.7 | 4.3 | 4.5 | 3.8 | 4.19 |
| Inspirational Leadership | 4.4 | 4. | 3.8 | 3.6 | 4.8 | | 4.6 | 4.2 | 4 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 4.1 |
| Influence | 3.6 | 4.2 | 3.2 | 3.8 | 4.2 | | 4.2 | 4 | 4.3 | 4 | 4 | 3.95 |
| Organizational Awareness | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4 | 4.4 | 3.8 | | 4.4 | 4.2 | 4.8 | 5 | 4 | 4.37 |
| Positive Outlook | 3.8 | 4.5 | 4 | 5 | 4 | | 4.7 | 4.5 | 4 | 4.2 | 4 | 4.27 |
| Teamwork | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.8 | 4.7 | | 4.5 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.49 |
| *Mean* | 4.01 | 4.4 | 4.02 | 4.37 | 4.48 | | 4.44 | 4.33 | 4.27 | 4.11 | 3.92 | 4.49 |

### *Teacher 1*

Teacher 1 works at Lilac Elementary School. He demonstrates the second lowest overall average of emotional and social competencies. His strength is in the area of achievement orientation, which is "Striving to meet or exceed a standard of excellence. People who demonstrate this competency look for ways to do things better, set challenging goals, and take calculated risks." His lower self-rating was in the area of influence, or "Having a positive impact on others. People who demonstrate this competency persuade or convince others to gain support for an agenda." This information

indicates that T1 works hard to create a good product and looks to improve his practice and teaching yet does not perceive himself as having control over others, perhaps even his students.

### *Teacher 2*

Teacher 2 was a teacher at Rose Elementary School and had the third highest overall score in the ESCI. T2 rated himself as a five in achievement orientation and coach and mentor. This indicates that he strives to reach goals and improve his practice. He works hard to be the best version of himself. He also has an active interest in building up others' abilities by providing feedback and support. T2 had the highest score in that area compared to all of the other participants. His lowest competency was in empathy, meaning that he does not see himself as strong at sensing others' feelings and perspectives or taking an interest in their concerns. This was tied as the lowest scored when compared to the other participants. It is interesting that he sees himself as a strong coach and mentor without being as skilled in understanding others perspectives.

### *Teacher 3*

T2, a teacher at Tulip Elementary School, rated herself the lowest of all of the other participants in the area of influence. It was also her lower rating compared to the other competencies. She rated herself high in teamwork and achievement, although her ratings were near the average ratings of the other participants in those two areas. She had the third lowest overall rating when compared to the average ratings of the other participants.

### *Teacher 4*

T4, a colleague of T3 at Tulip Elementary School, had an overall average rating as the third highest compared to the other participants. She rated herself highest (with a five) in the positive outlook competency. This indicates that she has a persistence in pursing goals despite obstacles and setbacks. Individuals with this area of strength see the positive in people, situations, and events more often than the negative. This was the highest rating among all of the other survey participants. She also rated herself higher than all of the other participants in the area of emotional self-control. Individuals who are strong in emotional self-control have the ability to keep disruptive emotions in and impulses in check. They are also able to maintain effectiveness under stressful or hostile conditions.

In contrast, she rated herself the lowest out of all the other participants in inspirational leadership. This was also her lowest rating in all of the competencies. This is interesting because despite her ability to pursue goals and view challenges as opportunities, she does not feel she has the ability to guide others and bring others together. This is surprising because she rated herself highest among the other participants in teamwork.

### *Teacher 5*

Teacher 5 was a teacher at Orchid Elementary School. Her overall self-rating was the highest among the other participants. Even though she had the highest average rating, she only had one rating of five, which was in conflict management. Participants who are strong in conflict management have the ability to bring disagreements into the open, effectively communicate the different positions and find solutions that are agreeable to

all. Unlike many of the other participants, she saw herself as an inspirational leader. Her rating in this area was 4.8 which is much higher than the average rating in this competency of 4.1. T5 rated herself significantly lower than other participants in the area of organizational awareness. Her rating of 3.8 is much lower than the average in that competency of 4.37. Those who are strong in organizational awareness have the ability to read a group's emotional currents and power relationships. They can identify influences, networks and dynamics.

***Teacher 6***

This teacher did not return the survey. The researcher attempted to contact them several times. There was no response.

***Teacher 7***

T7 was a teacher at Daisy Elementary School. She had the second highest average ratings when compared to the other participants. Her area of strength, with a score of five, was in the coach and mentor competency. She and one other participant, T2, rated themselves as being a five. This is much higher than the average participants' responses of 4.17. In contrast, her perception of her achievement was a relative weakness not only when compared to the other competencies but also when compared to the other participants. Her rating of 4.2 was less than the average of 4.56. Therefore, in spite of having a strength in taking an interest in developing others through feedback and support, she does not strive to meet or exceed a standard of excellence. It is also interesting to note that she rated herself lower than the average rating in emotional self-control; this was also her area of relative weakness among the competencies.

### *Teacher 8*

T7 and T8 are both teachers at Daisy Elementary School. T8 was right behind T7 in the average overall ratings for all of the competencies. All of their ratings were within a half of a point of each other. T8 did not rate herself a five in any area, which was unlike T7. Her highest rating was a 4.7, which she had in the following areas: achievement, emotional self-awareness, and teamwork. Surprising, her lowest self-rating of 3.7 was in the area of emotional self-control. Therefore, although she perceives herself as being able to recognize how her emotions affect her performance and can use those signals to tell them what they are feeling, she is not as comfortable in keeping those emotions in check, especially under stressful or hostile conditions.

### *Teacher 9*

T9 is a teacher at Daffodil Elementary School. She rated herself highest in organizational awareness. This score was higher than any other participants' and well above the average in this competency. In contrast, her scored of 3.7 in conflict management her lowest score as well as the lowest among the other participants' ratings in that competency. Her next lowest was in the area of emotion self-awareness, which was also below the average of the participants' scores.

### *Teacher 10*

Teacher 10, who teaches at Poppy Elementary School, demonstrated the highest self-rating in the area of organizational awareness. Her rating of five was much higher than the average rating in that competency of 4.37. She perceives herself of having a grasp of a group's emotional currents and power relationships and her ability of understanding dynamics within an organization or group. She also had the highest rating

among the other participants in the area of adaptability. She believes that she is flexible in handling change and is willingly able to change her own ideas or approaches based on the information she is given. She can juggle multiple demands. She rated herself lowest in emotional self-awareness not only among the other competencies but when compared to the other participants. Her lowest rating of 3.3 was in coach and mentor, well below the other participants' ratings as well as the average of 4.17.

### *Teacher 11*

A colleague of T10 at Poppy Elementary School, T11 had an overall average rating that was lower than all of the other participants. Her scores ranged from 3.7 to 4.2 among all of the competencies, which indicates she has no areas that really stand out as a self-perceived strength or a need. None of the scores present as an outlier when compared to the other participants.

### *Summary*

Overall the participants scored the highest in achievement orientation, with teamwork and organizational awareness following second and third highest. This shows that teacher participants, overall, are constantly improving their practice and looking to make things better. They also understand networks and dynamics. These participants are strong in working with others to achieve a goal. The lowest rating fell in influence, followed by emotional self-awareness and inspirational leadership. This demonstrates that the participants do not feel they have an impact on others or have the ability to bring people together to work on a task. It is surprising that emotional self-awareness is relatively low which indicates that the participants do not feel that they can recognize how emotions impact performance. Those who are high in this area use the signals of

how they are feeling to tell how they are doing. It would be interesting to look more closely as to why. It potentially could be that teachers are prone to ignoring emotions because they are always being watched.

When drilling down to look at the individual teacher participants, T5 had the highest average rating across all 12 competencies. T11 had the lowest average rating across all 12 competencies. Based on the findings of this study there is a disconnect. T11 was praised by her principal as having high levels of emotional self-control and self-awareness; however, she rated herself lower than the others in those competencies. It is also interesting to note that empathy does not have higher ratings among the participants. Throughout the interviews, teachers regularly referenced how they sense and perceives their students' feelings and perspectives. Principals also shared how teachers just had that gut intuition when reading student emotions and would act accordingly.

**Phase Three and Phase Four: Teacher and Principal Interviews**

This study included 11 separate teacher interviews followed by an administrator interview for each teacher except for one school. Interviews of teachers and principals lasted approximately 30 minutes. Both the teacher and principal interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded, noting significant themes.

The principal participants range in experience from four to 12 years in elementary education. They average eight years of experience as elementary principals. Principal ages range from 36 to 50 with a mean of 43.

The teacher participants agreed to be part of the study through a single email request. This proved to be difficult and in four cases, multiple emails were sent to teachers requesting their participation. Administrators also reached out to the teachers to

encourage participation. One principal did not participate after two requests were made. Five of the seven buildings had two teachers participate, while two buildings only had a single representative. However, each building had at least two participants, whether they were just teacher or a teacher and principal combination.

As participants answered the researcher's questions, four main themes emerged. Frequently mentioned responses were then categorized into those four main themes. The information below is presented by theme and then by frequency of responses.

### *Classroom Structure*

As outlined in Chapters One and Two, the way the classroom is structured influences the classroom climate. When participants discussed classroom structure all of the teachers made mention of the intentionality of building respect and community. One of the ways to accomplish this, which was stated by each teacher along with the principal, was through meaningful morning meeting practices. T9 and the associated principal shared that students feel like they are part of a community. Most of the participants discussed the importance of establishing and practicing routines, having students work in groups, providing a flexible environment, and allowing students to access resources and spaces within the classroom independently.

A little over half of the participants described their classroom as being one that is inclusive and accepting of all. Six of the participants discussed the importance of providing a safe, loving, and secure environment for students. Some of the participants stated that they provide students opportunities for input and choice and have high expectations. Four of the participants, including T3 and T4 from Tulip as well as T8 from Daisy and T11 from Poppy, state that they create rules together as a class. A few teachers

discussed how they want students to be excited to come to school. Three teachers mentioned the value of words and how they are used which impacts students. Two participants were described as being organized by their principal. T6 was the only participant to use classroom transformations. T7 was the only participant to reference a welcoming environment and how students help each other follow rules.

Table 11 organizes the interview responses from teachers and principals related to classroom structure. The seven schools are represented along the top row; they are then broken down into the teachers within those schools. For each teacher, 1-11, their respective principal's responses, when available, are marked accordingly. The responses are organized with the most frequently mentioned topic at the top to the least mentioned topics at the bottom.

**Table 11**

*Teacher and Principal Responses to Interview Questions about Classroom Structure*

| | Lilac | | Rose | | Tulip | | | | Orchid | | | | Daisy | | Daf | | Poppy | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | |
| | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | T | T | P | T | P | T | P |
| Build respect and community | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Meaningful morning meeting | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Establish and practice routines | | | X | | X | X | | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Students work in groups | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Student access to resources/space | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X |
| Flexible environment | | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | | X |
| Inclusive learning environment | | | X | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | X | | |
| Provide safety, love and security | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Student input and choice | | | X | X | | | | | X | | | | X | X | X | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| High expectations | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | | |
| Create rules together | | | | | X | | X | X | | | | | | X | | | | | X | |
| Excited to come to school | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Power of words | | | X | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Movement | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | X | | | | |
| Classroom transformation | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Welcoming environment | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Students help each other follow rules | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Organized | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | |

**Discussion.**

The data shows that Garden School District has successfully adopted Responsive Classroom, specifically with the implementation of Morning Meetings. Used as a vehicle to build respect and community, the Morning Meeting is an essential part of the school day for all staff and students. The staff of Garden School District understand the importance of having routines and procedures; they also value group work, flexibility, and student ownership over the resources and spaces in the classroom, yet most did not mention having students be a part of rule creation or student voice and choice. This is a relevant area of need for the district.

***Behavior***

As teachers and principals responded to the interview questions, they all discussed how they support students in their behavior. Almost all of the participants described how they observe students' behavior noticing facial expressions or body language to determine what a student was feeling. This was also noted by a few principals, who described the gut intuition of some teachers, the "X" factor. Most of the participants have differentiated expectations for each student when addressing or supporting behaviors in

the classroom. Most participants shared that they use calm-down strategies and explicitly model and teach emotions to their students. A teacher stated how important it is to take the opportunities to teach students interpersonal skills during the day because "Part of school is learning how to interact and be a good person."

When there is a negative behavior, most of the teachers shared that they have immediate and private conversations about the incident, helping the student know that they can learn from the mistake that was made. A couple teachers even work with the student to understand the root of the behavior and provide opportunities for students to work through conflict together, teaching students how to interact. One teacher shared that when you really listen to students, you find out the reason for their misbehavior. "It is usually heartbreaking. By not saying like you were wrong, they are so much more accommodating to put their wall down and explain well I didn't get any sleep last night because I was taking care of my little sister or something like that." One particular participant explained how she uses the conflict bridge to resolve conflict between students. This modeling created a reciprocal interaction. "I respect them and I respect their opinions and their respect to them as human beings, then I expect them to pay the same respect back." T11 and the associated principal from Poppy Elementary shared that they take time to reflect on behaviors with students. One teacher mentioned using natural consequences for behavior. A few teachers mentioned how important it is to start each day fresh, not have any carryover reactions to behavior that occurred previously. Teachers share that they remove their own emotional response to behaviors, separating the student from the behavior. One specific teacher shared that you need to realize your

reaction doesn't only affect the student you are speaking with but the entire class. A few teachers reinforce positive behavior and frequently check in with students.

Table 12 provides an overview of the interview responses from teachers and principals related to classroom structure. The teachers are listed 1-11 under their associated school. For each teacher, the principal's responses connected to that teacher are marked if available. The chart is organized from with the most often mentioned at the top.

**Table 12**

*Teacher and Principal Responses to Interview Questions about Behavior*

| | Lilac | | Rose | | Tulip | | | | Orchid | | | | Daisy | | Daf | | Poppy | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | |
| | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | T | T | P | T | P | T | P |
| Observe students' emotions | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | X |
| Calm down strategies | | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | | | | X | X |
| Model and teach emotions | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | X | X | X | X |
| Differentiated expectations | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Immediate, private conversations | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | | | | X | | X | | X | X | X | X | X |
| Learn from mistakes | | | X | | | | X | | | X | | X | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Teacher has gut intuition | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | X |
| Start each day fresh | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | X | | | X | | | |
| Remove teacher emotion | | | X | | | | X | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Reinforce positive behavior | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Check in with students | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | | X | |
| Teacher keep emotions separate | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | X | | |
| Reflections on behavior | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Understand root of behavior | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | |
| Work through conflict | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Teach students how to interact | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | |
| Teacher help students improve | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Celebrate student success | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | |
| Positive, empathetic teacher | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | |
| Natural consequences | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |

**Discussion.**

The staff of Garden School District really pay attention to their students and use observations to inform how they approach behaviors with each student. They understand that a child is complex and can have different reasons for the behaviors they are exhibiting and react accordingly. Teachers know that students need to be explicitly taught what they are feeling and the appropriate responses to those feelings. Teaching is not only academic in nature, but more focused on the whole child. The concept of growing from mistakes is present in the classrooms of the participants; teachers understand that students need space to learn from mistakes, understand the natural consequence of a behavior, and then move on without holding onto negative feelings.

### *Academics*

In contrast to the other overarching themes, there was less agreement among the participants when referencing academics. The highest number of responses related to academics from a single teacher was four with the lowest being one. Four of the 11 teachers interviewed noted problem-solving when describing their classroom climate. A different set of four teachers, except for one, shared that they take the time to relate their

learning to the real world. Four teachers described the environment as one in which they all learn together. A few teachers shared that they have students set goals and lead their learning, or learn through discovery or project-based learning. Two teachers, both from Poppy Elementary, shared that they explicitly teach students to value educational opportunities. The teachers from Tulip, as well as one from Poppy, mentioned the importance of collaboration with other teachers. Table 13 houses a chart of teacher and principal responses related to academics. It is organized first by school then by teacher. The principal's responses, if available, are marked as well.

**Table 13**

*Teacher and Principal Responses to Interview Questions about Academics*

| | Lilac | | Rose | | Tulip | | | | Orchid | | | | Daisy | | Daf | | Poppy | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | |
| | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | T | T | P | T | P | T | P |
| Problem solve | X | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | |
| Relate learning to real world | | | | | X | | X | | | | X | X | | | | | | | X | |
| All learning together | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | X | X | | | | | | |
| Students set goals | | | | | X | | | | | | X | | | X | | | | | | |
| Collaboration with other teachers | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | X | X |
| Students learn through discovery | | X | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | |
| Project based learning | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student lead learning | | X | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value educational opportunities | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X |

**Discussion.**

Due to the nature of the questions, there is not as much data within the academic theme. However, it was a necessary theme that because it is naturally inherent to the classroom. In this theme teachers were much more divided in what was mentioned. This could be an area for growth with opportunities for students to have more ownership in their learning, specifically in goal setting or project-based learning. The researcher would be curious to know why teachers from Poppy both mentioned the importance of teaching students to value educational opportunities and if this is a school wide focus or just specific to their grade level team or only an individual perspective. It is also interesting that both teachers from Tulip stated that they relate learning to the real world and collaborate with other teachers.

### *Relationships*

The final overarching theme was relationships. Teachers and principals frequently discussed the value of getting to know students through non-academic conversations and making connections with students. Most of the teachers, in agreement with the principals, shared that they greet their students daily. One teacher mentioned the importance of scheduling free time to have interactions as a class and giving opportunities to share. Over half of the participants shared that they value their students and help them to take others' perspectives. There were also mentions of teachers being responsible for student growth, teachers giving students their best, being highly motivated, and believing in students. Table 14 provides an overview of teacher and principal responses that were related to relationships in the classroom.

**Table 14**

*Teacher and Principal Responses to Interview Questions about Relationships*

| | Lilac | | Rose | | Tulip | | | | Orchid | | | | Daisy | | Daf | | Poppy | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | | 7 | 8 | 9 | | 10 | | 11 | |
| | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | P | T | T | T | P | T | P | T | P |
| Get to know student through non-academic conversations | X | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | X | X |
| Make connections with students | | X | X | | X | X | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X | X | | |
| Daily greeting of students | | | X | | | X | X | X | | | X | | | | | X | | | X | X |
| Take others' perspectives | | | X | | | | | | X | | X | | | X | X | | X | | X | X |
| Value the student | | | X | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | X | | X | X |
| Teacher connects with parents | | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | X | | | X | |
| Teachers are responsible for student growth | X | | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X | | | |
| Teachers give students their best | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | |
| Highly motivated | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | X |
| Free time for interactions | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Believe in students | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Give opportunities to share | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | | | | | | |
| Sense of humor | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | |

**Discussion.**

By design, Morning Meetings provide the structure for students to interact with each other and build relationships. It is a scheduled time within the school day for students to engage in non-academic conversations and provide an opportunity for connections between and among them. This could be why there was so much consensus in those topics.

### *Summary*

The information gathered from interviews conducted with the principals and teachers provided additional context to Phases 1 and 2. It is clear that there is a large emphasis on community building through Morning Meetings because all of the teachers and administrators mentioned it. This part of the school day plays into most of the overarching themes: classroom structure, behavior, and relationships. Of the four themes, those three had the most consensus among the teachers and principals. Teachers use this to build relationships among and between students and themselves. It is an opportunity for them to observe students, explicitly teach emotions and calm-down strategies and get to know students through non-academic conversations. In contrast, the teachers and principals did not mention similar topics related to academics. This theme had more variety with only four teachers, at most, referencing a specific academic approach.

In Chapter Two the cited Danielson Framework was used at Garden School District to evaluate teacher performance. Domain 2 of the Danielson Framework is focused on The Classroom Environment. This framework provides a rubric ranging from the distinguished teacher to the teacher in need of improvement. Teachers who are distinguished, according to Danielson, work to build relationships among students through careful planning, including the procedures, within the classroom. This was also evident in the data gathered from interviews. Teachers help students feel valued and safe, which also aligns with what the data from the interviews says. The distinguished teacher has clear and consistent expectations and individualized behavior redirection which is articulated in the Danielson framework as well as within the data gathered through principal and teacher interviews.

The Danielson framework states that the distinguished classroom manager is one who focuses on the students' role in the classroom, providing opportunities for the student to have a voice and responsibility for the follow-through of practices. This was not evident in the data gathered, with fewer teachers stating that they include students in creating rules, goal setting, or helping others to follow procedures or student ownership of behavior. Additionally, teachers should work to see students' perspectives; however, this was not as frequently mentioned in the interviews compared to other topics. Stronge (2018) in the Framework for the Learning Environment, stated that classroom management is best designed when it includes rules and procedures that are created with the students. Very few teachers interviewed mentioned that they have students involved in this process. Based on the literature and the information gleaned within this research, Garden School District would benefit from specific recommendations as articulated in Chapter Five.

# Chapter 5: Recommendations

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to explore the connection between teacher emotional intelligence and the classroom climate. This study demonstrates that the emotional intelligence of teachers plays a part in student well-being and the overall classroom climate. The research focused on the perceptions of fourth-grade teachers, their principals, and students in Garden School District. The information gathered from surveys and interviews provided data to measure the intersection of classroom climate and teacher emotional intelligence. This chapter presents this information and answers the three research questions posed in this study. This information adds to the literature concerning classroom climate and teacher emotional intelligence and fills the gap from the elementary perspective.

The results of this study provide recommendations for Garden School District relative to emotional intelligence and classroom climate. First, the data found that students do not have much ownership in their own learning and educational experiences. To correct this, Garden School District should provide professional development on how to engage students meaningfully as leaders of their own learning in their classroom. Additionally, Garden School District should develop a systematic approach to evaluate and improve classroom climate. This would also incorporate student perspective into their classroom climate evaluations. Finally, the district should invest in professional development that improves teacher and student emotional intelligence.

**Recommendation One: Garden School District should provide professional development on how to give students authority and autonomy over their own learning and educational experiences**

Danielson (2007) outlines the characteristics of a distinguished teacher in the area of student autonomy and authority over their own learning. The distinguished classroom manager focuses on the students' role in the classroom routines and procedures in which they have a voice and a responsibility for the establishment and follow-through of these procedures (Danielson, 2007). Fraser (1994) states that classroom management is best designed when it includes rules and procedures that are created with the students. Effective classroom managers are well prepared and keep students involved in the learning process.

When analyzing the data from the survey, students frequently indicated that they do feel loved and cared for, yet did not feel that they had opportunities to make decisions about their learning environment. The EDSCLS indicated across the district, students were seldom included in deciding class rules or class activities. The responses to "my teachers give students lots of chances to help decide class activities" and "my teachers let students help decide class rules," were significantly lower than the other prompts. Rose Elementary School had a significantly higher percentage of favorable responses. It would be beneficial for the district to take a closer look at what is happening in that building to engage students in the decision making surrounding class activities and class rules.

The data from the ESCI provides the teacher's perspective on his or her own authority and autonomy in the classroom. The survey results demonstrated the area of influence as the weakest of 12 competencies. Influence captures how an individual has a

positive impact on others. People who demonstrate this competency persuade or convince other to gain support for an agenda. It is interesting that teachers feel this way and should be examined more closely as it could be a factor in why they, in turn, are not as willing and able to provide students the opportunity to have an impact on others.

Teachers need to have more opportunities to influence others and get involved at the building level. By modeling this, it could have an impact on how students get involved in the class activities and decision-making. Additionally, professional development is needed to help teachers empower their students with more autonomy and authority in the classroom. The ESCI also showed that teachers scored highest in achievement orientation and teamwork. This shows that teacher participants are constantly improving their practice and looking to make things better. These participants are strong in working with others to achieve a goal. With the professional development provided about increasing student autonomy, teachers are willing to embrace this improvement in education and would do well to work in collaborative groups with fellow educators. This could be embedded in the differentiated supervision model that the district follows. Teachers are afforded the opportunity to be in a self-directed supervision mode for two years back to back. Collaborative groups could be formed with high expectations surrounding professional development of student autonomy and have the structure and feedback that the Individualized Action Plan provides within the supervision process. Taking these steps can ensure that teachers are growing and providing a valuable learning experience and climate for students.

**Recommendation Two: Garden School District should develop a systematic approach to evaluate and improve classroom climate**

Garden School District utilizes the Danielson Framework to evaluate classroom environment. Domain 2 of this framework focuses on an environment of respect and rapport, establishing a culture for learning, managing classroom procedures, managing student behavior, and organizing physical space (Danielson, 2007, p. 28). Effective teachers manage relationships with students to ensure they are positive and supportive; they recognize the variety of backgrounds students have and learn to see through that perspective. When students feel safe and valued, they know they will be treated well by their teacher and, in turn, are able to learn. Teachers who put a value on student relationships increase the students' self-worth (Danielson, 2007). In addition to relationships, the way that a teacher manages the classroom determines how well the students learn. An effective teacher is a good classroom manager (Wong & Wong, 1991). Effective learning environments have great cohesiveness, satisfaction, and goal direction (Fraser, 1994). The learning environment is a critical component of an effective teacher; it includes the teacher's abilities to manage the conditions, circumstances, and influences in the classroom that impact student performance and development.

Additionally, Garden School District participates in the EDSCLS to evaluate classroom climate. This survey collects a wide variety of information pertaining to Social Emotional Learning, Engagement, Safety, and Environment. This tool is used to design classroom and school experiences that will promote and sustain positive connections among teachers, students, and parents.

Although Garden School District has these two tools to measure classroom climate, they are not used systematically to improve classroom climate. It would be beneficial to provide a more robust and meaningful teacher evaluation process specific to classroom climate. The data gathered from the principal and teacher interviews demonstrate room for growth in certain components of Domain 2. It should also be noted that the teacher evaluation process was not mentioned by teacher participants as a tool that helps to improve their practice. It was, however, referenced by principals as they described the teachers' classroom environment. There is a disconnect among administrators in how they support teachers' growth. The district should provide explicit training that provides administrators with tools and resources for supervision and evaluation that will lead to teacher learning.

The district also should share the responses to the EDSCLS with staff as a tool for learning. Although it was shared at the building level by most administrators, there was no expectation or systematic approach outlined by the central office. This would be an excellent tool for buildings to identify goals or even embed into teachers' differentiated supervision plans. It is unclear how often this survey is administered, so a long-term plan should be developed and communicated with all invested stakeholders.

Runkle (2020) found that the principals did not have a systematic approach to monitoring their school climate. He recommends biannual benchmark surveys supplemented with a targeted collection of qualitative data based on the benchmark results would better provide principals with an accurate measure of their school climate. He suggests that the same value that is put on academic achievement be placed on the school climate. By using the EDSCLS as the tool to measure as a benchmark assessment

twice a year – once at the end of the first trimester and another at the end of the third trimester. Using this data, a set of survey tools would be developed to garner qualitative feedback from stakeholders. This would provide additional context for the classroom climate as well.

### Recommendation Three: Improve Teacher and Student Emotional Intelligence

#### *Teacher Emotional Intelligence*

The literature and data all indicate teacher emotional intelligence has a connection and impact on the climate of a classroom. Mayer and Salovey (1997) posit those with strong emotional intelligence have the adeptness to understand relationships among various emotions, perceive the causes and consequences of emotions, understand complex feelings, emotional blends and contradictory states, and understand transitions among emotions. When a classroom is designed to include high-quality emotional and instructional interactions, there are better outcomes for children (Mashburn et al., 2008). Teachers who foster high-quality relationships with their students increase their students' successes, specifically across elementary grades (Zee et al., 2020), and teachers who possess high levels of emotional intelligence are more adept as they navigate the relational aspect of teaching and building a strong classroom climate. Teachers with high levels of emotional intelligence are able to moderate their perception of a situation as being positive or negative and thus influencing their response (Perry and Ball, 2007). Teachers greatly influence the classroom environment, specifically in regard to their own emotional intelligence. Teachers with a high emotion-regulation ability are more equipped to establish caring relationships, manage conflict, and problem solve effectively in the classroom (Brackett et al., 2010).

Emotional intelligence is learned and can be taught. The brain is malleable, especially during childhood. Therefore, if students are taught emotional intelligence, they will utilize these strategies the rest of their lives. Children can learn healthy ways to cope with support from a caring adult, such as a teacher. Schools must teach children how to understand their emotions with effective modeling by the educators through caring, respectful interactions (O'Neil, 1996). A school culture should reflect the realization that social emotional skills must explicitly be taught and coached to both students are teachers (Jones et al., 2013).

When analyzing the data from the ESCI participant results, there is a need for teachers to have explicit instruction in emotional intelligence. Of the 12 competencies, the teachers overall were relatively weak in influence, inspirational leadership, emotional self-awareness, coach and mentor, emotional self-control, and empathy. After influence, teacher emotional self-awareness was the lowest on average. This is surprising because this competency speaks to recognizing how emotions impact performance. Conversely, those who are high in this area use the signals of how they are feeling to tell how they are doing. Teachers potentially are ignoring their emotions because they are always performing for their students and, in turn, not recognizing their impact effectively. It also indicated that teachers do not know how well they are doing in the classroom. During principal interviews, teachers were praised by their administrators, yet the ESCI demonstrates teachers do not feel they are doing a good job.

The interviews also indicated that teachers do not take the time to care for their own emotional needs. They intentionally keep their emotional responses regulated, taking time to deliver a response that is appropriate and not harmful to their students. Although

this is good in practice, it could be destructive for the educator. PD or teacher preparation programs designed to teach teachers the components of emotional intelligence and how to strengthen them can increase job satisfaction and have a positive impact on the classroom climate. By engaging teachers in emotional intelligence professional development, they can examine healthy ways to understand their own emotions, how they impact others, and how to express them appropriately.

The improvement of teacher emotional intelligence can occur alongside the principal's growth in emotional intelligence. Runkle (2020) found that teachers voiced their desire and intent to work harder for principals who develop meaningful relationships with them. Similarly, principals in his study did not rate themselves high in several areas of emotional intelligence according to the ESCI. His recommendation states that principals should engage in coaching to develop emotional intelligence.

### *Student Social Emotional Learning*

Social emotional learning practiced daily builds emotional awareness, incorporates reflection into daily practice, tackles professional and personal stress, and creates a culture of regular learning and improvement (Jones et al., 2013). Maximizing a student's potential to be successful in life involves a mix of both academic achievement and social-emotional competence. Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the development of capacity in students to know and control emotions, solve problems, improve resiliency, and ability to develop positive relationships (Zins & Elias, 2007). When SEL is embedded into a school's climate and culture, it results in decreased exclusionary discipline to control behavior. (McBride et al., 2016; Osher et al., 2010).

Through the implementation of SEL, schools can teach students "self-regulation, self-monitoring, and social skills" (Norris, 2003, p. 313).

When analyzing the data from the EDSCLS, students at some elementary schools indicated a need for social emotional instruction. Students were relatively less favorable in their response to "I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me" and "Adults working at this school help students learn how to control their feelings and actions." In response to this, the district should continue to develop their social emotional curriculum. Although there is time carved out for Morning Meetings, the explicit social emotional instruction piece is not embedded. The interviews also indicated that teachers do try to provide emotional instruction but do not have a framework or scope and sequence to execute proactively. The interviews indicated that teachers understand students are all different and therefore they should have differentiated approaches to managing behaviors. The district should continue its involvement in Responsive Classroom practices to extended beyond Morning Meeting and embed social emotional learning in a systematic and proactive method.

**Conclusion**

Teacher emotional intelligence is a factor that influences classroom climate in fourth-grade classrooms. The literature provided evidence that teacher emotional intelligence has an impact at the secondary and post-graduate level of education; however, the gap in the elementary setting needed to be studied. This research study fills that gap and is in line with the literature surrounding teacher emotional intelligence and classroom climate. Teachers who can manage their own emotions and the emotions of

others are more likely to develop a distinguished classroom climate, as defined by the Danielson framework.

The data gathered from the emotional intelligence inventory provided information on teacher's perceptions of their own emotional intelligence. The data from the school climate survey provided the students' perspective on teacher emotional intelligence and classroom climate. The data from the principal and teacher interviews further explored the teachers' emotional intelligence and the classroom climate. The triangulation of the data shows a strong connection between emotional intelligence and classroom climate. Because of this, recommendations were made to strengthen this connection by supporting teachers in their emotional intelligence understanding as well as providing a structure for improving classroom climate with a focus on student autonomy.

Teachers hold the key to the classroom climate. It is with them that a positive climate is constructed. The more they know, the more they can construct a classroom that supports students. It is difficult to evaluate and measure a classroom climate; yet, it needs to be a part of the practice of educators. It is in this environment that students grow as people. The educational system must prioritize this and embed it in teacher preparatory classes as well as district initiatives. With this shift in focus, students will be afforded the educational experience they need.

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## Appendix A

Participant Demographic Survey

Teacher Survey

| | |
|---|---|
| Name: | |
| Age: | |
| Gender: | |
| Total years completed in education: | |
| Years completed as a classroom teacher: | |
| Years in current role: | |
| Total number of students in your classroom last year: | |
| Percentage of low socio-economically disadvantaged students in your classroom: | |

## Appendix B

### Items Contained in Short Forms of ICEQ, MCI, and CES

***Individualized Classroom Environment Questionnaire (ICEQ)***

The items not underlined below are scored 1,2, 3.4, 5, respectively, for the responses Almost Never, Seldom, Sometimes, Often, and Very Often. Underlined items are scored in the reverse manner. Omitted or invalid responses arc scored 3. The first, second, third, fourth, and fifth items in each block of five measure, respectively, Personalization. Participation, Independence, Investigation, and Differentiation.

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I. The teacher talks with each student.

2. Students give their opinions during discussions.

3. The teacher decides where students sit.

4. Students find out the answers to questions from textbooks rather than from investigations.

5. Different students do different work.

6. The teacher takes a personal interest in each student.

7. The teacher lectures without students asking or answering questions.

8. Students choose their partners for group work.

9. Students carry out investigations to test ideas.

10. All students in the class do the same work at the same time.

11. The teacher is unfriendly to students.

12. Students' ideas and suggestions are used during classroom discussion.

13. Students are told how to behave in the classroom.

14. Students carry out investigations to answer questions coming from class discussions.

15. Different students use different books, equipment, and materials.

16. The teacher helps each student who is having trouble with the work.

17. Students ask the teacher questions.

18. The teacher decides which students should work together.

19. Students explain the meanings of statements, diagrams, and graphs.

20. Students who work faster than others move on to the next topic.

21. The teacher considers students' feelings.

22. There is classroom discussion.

23. The teacher decides how much movement and talk there should be in the classroom.

24. Students carry out investigations to answer questions which puzzle them.

25. The same teaching aid (e.g., blackboard or overhead projector) is used for all students in the class.

***My Class Inventory (MCZ)***

The items not underlined below are scored 3 and 1, respectively, for the responses Yes and No. Underlined items are scored in the reverse manner. Omitted or invalid responses are scored 2. The first, second, third, fourth, and fifth items in each block measure, respectively, Satisfaction, Friction, Competitiveness, Difficulty, and Cohesiveness.

1. The pupils enjoy their schoolwork in my class.

2. Children are always fighting with each other.

3. Children often race to see who can finish first.

4. In our class the work is hard to do.

5. In my class everybody is my friend.

6. Some pupils are not happy in class.

7. Some of the children in our class are mean.

8. Most children want their work to be better than their friend's work.

9. Most children can do their schoolwork without help.

10. Some people in my class are not my friends.

11. Children seem to like the class.

12. Many children in our class like to fight.

13. Some pupils feel bad when they don't do as well as the others

14. Only the smart pupils can do their work.

15. All pupils in my class are close friends.

16. Some of the pupils don't like the class.

17. Certain pupils always want to have their own way.

18. Some pupils always try to do their work better than the others

19. Schoolwork is hard to do.

20. All of the pupils in my class like one another.

21. The class is fun.

22. Children in our class fight a lot.

23. A few children in my class want to be first all of the time.

24. Most of the pupils in my class know how to do their work.

25. Children in our class like each other as friends.

***Classroom Environment Scale (CES)***

The items not outlined below are scored 3 and 1, respectively, for the responses of Yes and No. Underlined items are scored in the reverse manner. Omitted or invalid responses are scored 2. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth items in each block of six measure, respectively, Involvement, Affiliation, Teacher Support, Task Orientation, Order and Organization, and Rule Clarity.

1. Students put a lot of energy into what they do here.

2. Students in this class get to know each other really well.

3. This teacher spends very little time just talking with students.

4. We often spend more time discussing outside student activities than class-related material.

5. This is a well-organized class.

6. There is a clear set of rules for students to follow.

7. Students daydream a lot in this class.

8. Students in this class aren't very interested in getting to know other students.

9. The teacher takes a personal interest in students.

10. Getting a certain amount of classwork done is very important in this class.

11. Students are almost always quiet in this class.

12. Rules in this class seem to change a lot.

13. Students are often "clockwatching" in this class.

14. A lot of friendships have been made in this class.

15. The teacher is more like a friend than an authority.

16. Students don't do much work in this class.

17. Students fool around a lot in this class.

18. The teacher explains what will happen if a student breaks a rule.

19. Most students in this class really pay attention to what the teacher is saying.

20. It's easy to get a group together for a project.

21. The teacher goes out of his/her way to help students.

22. This class is more a social hour than a place to learn something.

23. This class is often very noisy.

24. The teacher explains what the rules are.

## Appendix C

ESCI Survey

It should take you about 25 minutes to complete this questionnaire. Each item in the questionnaire describes a work-related behavior. Think about your performance over the previous 3 to 6 months. Then, use the scale below to indicate how consistently you exhibit each behavior. Please note some of the items are written in the negative or reverse direction

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

Please try to respond to all of the items. If for some reason an item does not apply simply choose the Don't know option

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

1.I have difficulty adapting to uncertain and changing conditions

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

2.I see the positive in people, situations, and events more often than the negative

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

3.I convince others by getting support from key people

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

4.I get impatient or show frustration inappropriately

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

5.I lead by building pride in the group

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

6.I understand social networks

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

7.I lead by inspiring people Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

8.I try to resolve conflict instead of allowing it to fester

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

9.I initiate actions to improve my own performance

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

10.I adapt by smoothly juggling multiple demands

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

11.I do not cooperate with others Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

12.I work well in teams by being supportive

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

13.I understand the values and culture of the team or organization

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

14.I resolve conflict by de-escalating the emotions in a situation

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

15.I allow conflict to fester

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:16.I act appropriately even in emotionally charged situations

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

17.I convince others by using multiple approaches

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

18.I remain calm in stressful situations

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

19.I adapt by applying standard procedures flexibly

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

20.I convince others by appealing to their self-interest

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

21.I understand the informal structure in the team or organization

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

22.I provide on-going mentoring or coaching

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

23.I understand another person's motivation

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

24.I do not inspire followers

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

25.I work well in teams by encouraging cooperation

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

26.I try to resolve conflict by openly talking about disagreements with those involved

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

27.I lead by bringing out the best in people

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

28.I seek to improve myself by setting measurable and challenging goals

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

29.I do not strive to improve my own performance

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

30.I understand others by listening

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

31.I do not understand subtle feelings of

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

32.I provide feedback others find helpful for their development

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

33.I work well in teams by soliciting others'

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

34.I am able to describe how my feelings affect my actions

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

35.I adapt overall strategy, goals, or projects to fit the situation

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

36.I strive to improve my performance

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

37.I work well in teams by being respectful of others

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

38.I anticipate how others will respond when trying to convince them

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

39.I describe underlying reasons for my feelings

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

40.I do not try to improve

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

41.I am aware of the connection between what is happening and my feelings

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

42.I adapt to shifting priorities and rapid change

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

43.I understand others by putting myself into others' shoes

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

44.I show awareness of my feelings

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

45.I believe the future will be better than the past

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

46.I resolve conflict by bringing it into the open

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

47.I personally invest time and effort in developing others

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:48.I do not describe my feelings

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

49.I convince others by developing behind-the-scenes support

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

50.I view the future with hope

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

51.I adapt overall strategy, goals, or projects to cope with unexpected events

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

51.I adapt overall strategy, goals, or projects to cope with unexpected events

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

52.I coach and mentor others

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

53.I understand others' perspectives when they are different from my own

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

54.I do not spend time developing others

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

55.I see possibilities more than problems

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

56.I work well in teams by encouraging participation of everyone present

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

57.I seek ways to do things better

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

58.I remain composed, even in trying moments

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

59.I control my impulses appropriately in

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

60.I lose composure when under stress

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

61.I lead by articulating a compelling vision

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

62.I see opportunities more than threats

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

63.I acknowledge my own strengths and weaknesses

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

64.I understand the informal processes by which work gets done in the team or organization

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

How often do you exhibit the following behavior:

65.I see the positive side of a difficult situation

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Consistently Don't know

# Appendix D

| Research Questions<br><br>1. What are the teacher, student, and administrator perceptions of the teacher's emotional intelligence?<br>2. What are the administrator, teacher, and student perceptions of the classroom environment?<br>3. What relationship, if any, exists between the emotional intelligence of the teacher and the title 1 fourth grade classroom environment? | Research Questions | Self-Awareness | Self-Regulation | Internal Motivation | Empathy | Social Skills | Respectandrapport | Culturefor learning | Classroomprocedures | Student behavior | Physical space |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Teacher Questions** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Describe your classroom environment. | 2,3 | | | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| To what do you attribute to this environment? | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | |
| How do you create an environment of respect and rapport in your classroom? | 2,3 | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| How do you establish a culture for learning? | 2,3 | X | X | | | | | X | | | X |
| How do you establish and maintain classroom procedures? | 2,3 | | | | X | X | | | X | | X |
| Describe your student behavior management approach. | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| How do you organize the physical space of your classroom? | 2,3 | | | | | | | | X | | X |
| Describe how you perceive and manage your own emotions in the classroom. | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Describe how you manage your students' emotions in the classroom. | 1,2,3 | | X | | X | X | X | | | | |
| How do you work to build and maintain relationships among your students? Among your students' parents? | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| How do you read the emotional pulse of your students? Your students' parents? | 1,2,3 | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | |
| What motivates you and how do you use it to grow? | 1 | X | X | X | | | | X | | | |
| **Principal Questions** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Describe *teacher's* classroom environment. | 2,3 | | | | | | | X | X | X | X |
| To what do you attribute to this environment? | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| How does *teacher* create an environment of respect and rapport in the classroom? | 2,3 | X | X | | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| How does *teacher* establish a culture for learning? | 2,3 | X | X | | | | | X | | | X |
| How does *teacher* establish and maintain classroom procedures? | 2,3 | | | | X | X | | | X | | X |
| Describe *teacher's* student behavior management approach. | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | |
| Describe the physical space of the classroom and how it is utilized. | 2,3 | | | | | | | | X | | X |
| Describe *teacher's* perceptions and management of his or her emotions. | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | |
| Describe *teacher's* management of student emotions. | 1,2,3 | | X | | X | X | X | | | | |
| How does *teacher* work to build and maintain relationships among the students? Among the students' parents? | 1,2,3 | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X |
| Describe how *teacher* reads the emotional pulse of the students. The students' parents. | 1,2,3 | X | X | | X | X | X | | | X | |
| What motivates *teacher* and how does he or she grow as an educator? | 1 | X | X | X | | | | X | | | |