

Changing School Design to Change Culture

Sara Reith, Ed.S., NCSP
Wooster City Schools, Wooster OH



Introduction

Research links positive school environment to higher test scores, graduation rates, and attendance rates. For students to achieve academic success they must attend and be engaged in school, and school environment can influence both attendance and engagement.

Research underscores the following: Physical environment is related to teachers' levels of absenteeism, effort, effectiveness in the classroom, morale, and job satisfaction.

Environment is linked to building culture and frequency of disciplinary referrals.

Physical environment is related to both student achievement and student behavior.

The present study sought to measure the impact made to by a lobby redesign project in an Elementary setting.

In the Fall of 2014, a partnership was established between the Columbus College of Art and Design and Wooster City Schools to enact a lobby redesign project with the following goals:

1. Improve building culture
2. Enhance communication between parents and school
3. Improve student pride and engagement
4. Organize space for efficiency of multi-functional use
5. Create specific character and learning environments for classroom access

Procedures

In the Spring of 2015, The Columbus College of Art and Design made visitation to the school campus and completed a series of design boards as a student learning project. In the Fall of 2015, Parkview Elementary executed the designs.

Baseline ratings were collected prior to and following the redesign. Teachers, Parents, and Students completed a survey measuring precepts of engagement, representation, pride, and access to information using a 1 to 5 likert scale.

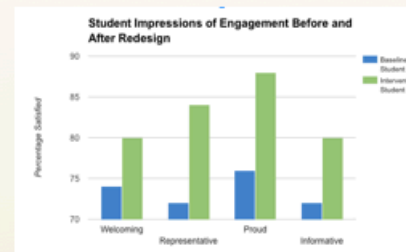
Pre and post results were collected along with qualitative impressions from over 214 participants.

Aggregation of data compared percentage of positive impressions for each subgroup and category.

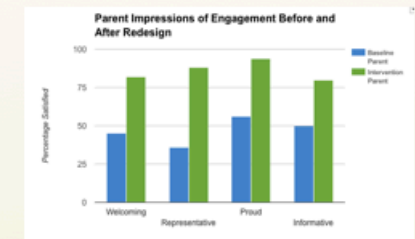
Participants

Demographics	#
Total Participants Surveyed	214
Students Surveyed	180
Staff Surveyed	24
Parents Surveyed	10

Results



Results cont.



Conclusion

Comparing baseline ratings to post-intervention ratings, overall participants rated the following percentages of improvement: 30% improvement in "welcoming environment", 44% improvement in "representation of the building to district mission," 31% improvement in "pride in school" and 36% improvement in access to information about the building. Implications include improvement of representation to the community, engagement to learn, and student locus of responsibility for surroundings.

References

- Earlman, G., Cash, C., & Van Berkm, D. (1995). "A Statewide Study of Student Achievement and Behavior and School Building Condition." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Council of Educational Facility Planners, International, Dallas, TX.
- Cororan, Thomas B., Lisa J. Walker, and J. Lynne White (1988). *Working in Urban Schools*. Washington, DC: Institute for Educational Leadership.
- Gottfredson, G.D., and Gottfredson, D.C. (1985). *Victimization in Schools*. New York: Plenum.
- Laub, J.H., and Lauritsen, J.L. (1998). *School Violence, Neighborhood and Family Conditions*. In Elliot, D.S., Hamburg, B.A., and Williams, K.R. (Eds.), *Violence in American Schools*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Planty, M., and DeVoe, J.F. (2005). *An Examination of the Conditions of School Facilities Attended by 10th-Grade Students in 2002 (NCES 2006-302)*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.