Innovative Survey Tool Helps School Leaders Chart a Path of Continuous Improvement

The Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy releases School Culture 360™ nationally

Baltimore, MD. (March 4, 2020) – A strong school culture is linked to positive student outcomes such as higher academic achievement and more robust civic engagement. This connection has been validated by domestic and international research, which defines “strong school culture” as a distinctive school mission that is understood by all participants and can be seen across all of the school’s institutional practices.

The Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy (“Institute”) is pleased to announce the release of School Culture 360™ – an innovative survey that explores the key facets of a school’s culture, including its academic emphasis and identity; capacity to nurture the whole student; clarity of mission shared across participants and subgroups; and sense of community and inclusivity. The survey also examines whether a school reflects the conditions that make civic participation in adulthood more likely.

“We are delighted to share this resource with school leaders across the country,” notes Deputy Director Ashley Berner, who led the development of School Culture 360™. “Our team meticulously back-mapped the research on civic participation, academic success, and mission alignment into questions that, taken together, provide an in-depth picture of school life.”
Critically, the tool is school-sector agnostic; it was developed in consultation with leaders from district, charter, and private schools and is valid across all of them. Indeed, the Institute’s pilot – which included 20,000 teachers, administrators, parents, and 6-12th-grade students – took place across the country in systems as diverse as a mid-sized district in Louisiana and the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

School Culture 360™ can also be used for needs assessments and targeted interventions. For example, Louisiana’s initial pilot targeted schools with excessive exclusionary discipline practices.

Lisa French, Director of Student Engagement and Success for the Louisiana Department of Education, stated, “We see this pilot as a huge opportunity for our schools with excessive exclusionary discipline practices to become more aware of, and in tune with, their school culture. The survey results enable these schools to create deeper relationships that foster a culture of belonging and create learning environments that are academically challenging and supportive for all students."

“The School Culture 360™ Survey has finally given us a chance to look at culture across the Archdiocese of Baltimore and at individual schools,” said Dr. Eric Watts, director of instruction and student achievement for the Archdiocese of Baltimore. “Prior to the partnership with the Institute, we had an invalid and unreliable instrument that was plagued by low response rates. Now, we feel confident in our assessment of school culture across the system. We can start addressing some areas of need and celebrating areas of success.”

The survey can be funded with Title IV dollars – an important consideration for systems that serve predominantly low-income students.

**How it Works**

The Institute partners with state, district, charter, and private-school leaders to field the surveys, which are then housed in a firewalled Hopkins data base. System leaders have access to data visualizations and reports, as well as to the Institute’s research-based “Intervention Guide” that can help school leaders decide what needs to be addressed immediately, and how.

For more information on how School Culture 360™ works and why it matters, please contact Deputy Director Ashley Berner at ashley.berner@jhu.edu
The **Institute for Education Policy at Johns Hopkins University**, headquartered in Baltimore, MD, is a policy-focused Center at the School of Education committed to translating research on what works for educational excellence and equity to those on the front lines of policy and practice. The Institute is particularly focused upon ensuring that all children have access to deep and intellectually challenging curricula, school models that meet students’ diverse needs, and highly-effective educators.