

**Evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise
Working Paper #7**

**THE IMPACT OF THE
KALAMAZOO PROMISE
ON SCHOOL CLIMATE**

**Working
Paper**

#7

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NOVEMBER 2009



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The evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise is funded by U.S. Department of Education grant #R305A070381. Information about this evaluation and additional working papers can be viewed at <www.wmich.edu/kpromise>.

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The authors recognize and express their gratitude to Erik Gunn, who assisted with editing the report. The paper benefitted from comments and input by colleagues at WMU and Kalamazoo Public Schools. We are also grateful to our many graduate students and research assistants who helped in conducting some of the interviews and helped with the coding and synthesis of student interview data. Finally, we wish to thank many employees at KPS that either participated in an interview or helped to facilitate the administration of the student surveys. While we recognize and express our appreciation for the contributions made by others, we are mindful that we—the authors—are responsible for the content of the report, including errors of fact or interpretation.

Executive Summary

The Kalamazoo Promise has garnered national attention as a potential model for systemic school and community transformation. In the fall of 2005, it was announced that a group of anonymous donors had “leveled the playing field” for students in the local school district. All students who graduate from a district high school and gain acceptance at a postsecondary institution are now eligible for a four-year scholarship covering tuition and fees. This universal postsecondary scholarship is distinctive and far-reaching. A federally funded evaluation is underway to determine the effects of this program on attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes.

This working paper, the seventh in a series of formative reports, centers on potential changes in school climate that may result from this initiative. Surveys were conducted with more than 1,800 high school students, and in-depth interviews were held with 42 students and more than 40 school professionals. These data sources allow for an examination of the school climate in the district high schools and changes that stakeholders associate with the implementation of the Promise.

School climate involves relatively enduring patterns of behavior and interaction in the school environment that are influenced by shared beliefs, values, and attitudes. A positive climate is associated with a variety of outcomes, including achievement, attendance, student engagement, expectations, competence, esteem, and self-concept. In this paper, we conceptualize school climate in terms of shared perceptions of teacher-student and peer relationships, academic orientation, college guidance, and behavioral values. Key questions addressed in the paper include: How do students and educators in KPS perceive school climate in the school district? Do stakeholders note changes in these relationships or beliefs as a result of the implementation of the Promise? How do changes in school climate affect other short- and long-term anticipated outcomes?

Survey Results

Portions of a nationally-normed survey of school climate were utilized to determine perceptions of school climate in the Kalamazoo high schools. Most of the results indicate ratings in 40-45th percentile. These are slightly below the national average, but are consistent with larger schools that have urban characteristics. Students report that indicators of

school climate improved between 2007 and 2008. We were able to explore and analyze differences across subgroups of students using subscales of the school climate survey:

- ❑ There are significant differences between males and females on perceptions of teacher-student relationships, student-peer relationships, and behavioral values. Males were more likely than females to see these dimensions of school climate as positive, whereas females were more likely than males to hold higher student aspirations.
- ❑ Students who participated in the free and reduced-price lunch programs reported having higher academic orientation, behavioral values, and a more positive experience with guidance than did students who did not participate in these programs. However, students who did not participate in the free and reduced-price lunch program had higher student aspirations than did those who did participate in it.
- ❑ Findings with respect to race and ethnicity were mixed. Students who identified as White or Asian were statistically more likely than were students who identified as Black to report higher perceptions of teacher-student relationships. In contrast, students who identified as Black, Hispanic, or Native American were more likely to hold higher levels of academic orientation. Likewise, Black students were more likely than White students to report higher levels of behavioral values. There were no statistically significant differences with respect to levels of student aspirations.

Interviewees were asked to rate the amount of change across a number of specific aspects of the school since the announcement of the Promise. Based on interviews with middle and high school students and school professionals, we found that:

- ❑ Just over 75% of school professionals report positive change in school climate.
- ❑ 49% of students believed that student behavior in school had improved (i.e., Slightly positive change or Strongly positive change) since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise.
- ❑ 45% of professionals report that student behavior has improved. Teachers, on the whole were less positive than were principals and guidance counselors when it came perceptions of change in student behavior.

Qualitative Findings

Student perceptions. A number of students remarked how teachers are using the incentive of the promise to inspire changes in behavior. Also, many note how students are trying to influence their peers' academic behaviors. Students report their global impressions about behavior in the schools, and display existing misconceptions about the Promise. These comments help to contextualize the effects of this scholarship program through the lens of student experience. *Educator perceptions.* In sharing views on school climate, educators blur descriptions of the general feeling of school climate with ideas about changes in climate. Many educators portrayed the school climate in a positive light. Consistent with the quantitative findings, though, reports were also often mixed, with many reservations about the prospect for quick changes in the district due to the Promise. This paper reports these positive, mixed, and negative views of school climate.

Conclusion

Several emergent themes presented themselves in the analysis of evaluation data. Many speak of changing dynamics in the district through shifting demographic patterns. Several educators note that school climate has been affected by the influx of new families and students. These comments are mixed, as educators note both positive and negative trends in this area. Many of the comments suggest optimism that families who came to Kalamazoo specifically for the Promise may have strong pro-educational tendencies that may positively affect the climate of the schools.

School climate is an important indicator of larger school reform efforts. Tracking changes in this variable over time will allow administrators and school professionals to focus efforts and target interventions in appropriate ways. In many reform models, climate is resistant to quick fixes. With the Promise, early findings suggest that the presence of a universal intervention in college preparation may be affecting this dynamic in positive ways.

Contents

Executive Summary	i
Contents	iii
Introduction and Background	1
Research on School Climate	1
Methodology	3
Sample and Data Collection for Student Survey	3
Sample and Data Collection for Interviews	3
Data Analysis	4
Findings	5
Student Perceptions of Changes in School Climate	5
Differences Across Student Subgroups	7
Perceptions of Change in Student Behavior and School Climate	8
Student Perceptions of Changes in School Climate: Student Interview Responses	9
Educator Perceptions of Changes in School Climate	10
Discussion and Conclusion	11
References	12
Appendix A Quantitative Analyses of Student Surveys	13
Appendix B School Climate: Student Interview Responses	16
Appendix C School Climate: Educator Interview Responses	19

The Impact of the Kalamazoo Promise on Teachers' Expectations for Students

Introduction and Background

The Kalamazoo Promise was announced in the fall of 2005, offering free college education at any public state college or university for graduates of the district who have gained acceptance to a post-secondary institution. This program was funded through the generous support of anonymous donors. A program such as the Kalamazoo Promise may serve as a catalyst for systemic change in the Kalamazoo Public School district. The Promise is a universal scholarship program, covering tuition and fees. This is a powerful incentive for administrators, teachers, parents, and students to work toward preparing all students for post-secondary options. Of course, many school reforms seek to alter specific structures or programs. However, one key component of our evaluation is to examine the potentially positive impact of the Promise on deep-seated belief systems among key stakeholders.

Previous papers have addressed a number of anticipated outcomes related to the Promise. These include preliminary evidence of increased community support, improved teacher expectations for students, improved student aspirations, increased enrollments and retention, and improved postsecondary enrollment and attendance rates.¹ Long-term outcomes may take five years or more before we can expect change resulting from the Promise. An outcomes logic model (see Figure 1) provides a causal framework that allows an examination of short-term and intermediate outcomes linked to the long-term outcomes.

This is the seventh in a series of working papers on the evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise. This paper centers on perceptions of school climate, such as teacher-student relationships, student peer relationships, academic orientation, and students' behavioral values. The perceptions of and beliefs about these relationships and others are likely to have changed as a result of the Promise. This paper reports findings based on data that include student surveys, student interviews, as well as interviews with district principals, guidance counselors, and teachers. The design allows us to understand school climate from

the perspectives of the various stakeholders.

Figure 1 presents the logic model that has guided the conceptualization of the data collection and analysis. In addition, an extensive body of research on school climate informs this paper. The analysis for this particular paper is guided by the following questions: How do students and educators in KPS perceive school climate (i.e., relationships, student behavioral values, academic orientation, and guidance) in the school district? Do stakeholders note changes in these relationships or beliefs as a result of the implementation of the Promise? How do changes in school climate affect other short and long-term anticipated outcomes?

Research on School Climate

As an intermediate outcome, school climate allows for an important view of the impact of the Kalamazoo Promise. The concept of "climate" is an instrumental variable in schools, and as such has benefited from much theoretical and empirical attention in the research literature. School climate has been studied from various perspectives including leadership and organizational theory, social capital, and developmental psychology. Ostensibly, school climate involves relatively enduring patterns of behavior and interaction in the school environment that are influenced by shared beliefs, values, and attitudes (Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004; Keefe, Kelley, & Miller, 1985; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, Emmons, & Blatt, 1997). Climate is usually conceptualized as related to relationships among faculty, students, parents, and the community as well as academic orientation, and behavioral values. Climate, then, is related to both organizational and interpersonal elements of the school environment. Although there are various definitions and conceptualizations of school climate, our study utilizes the rather broad definition used by the American Educational Research Association's special interest group for School Community, Climate, and Culture (Bulach, 1998):

¹ Released working papers are available at: <http://www.wmich.edu/kpromise/>

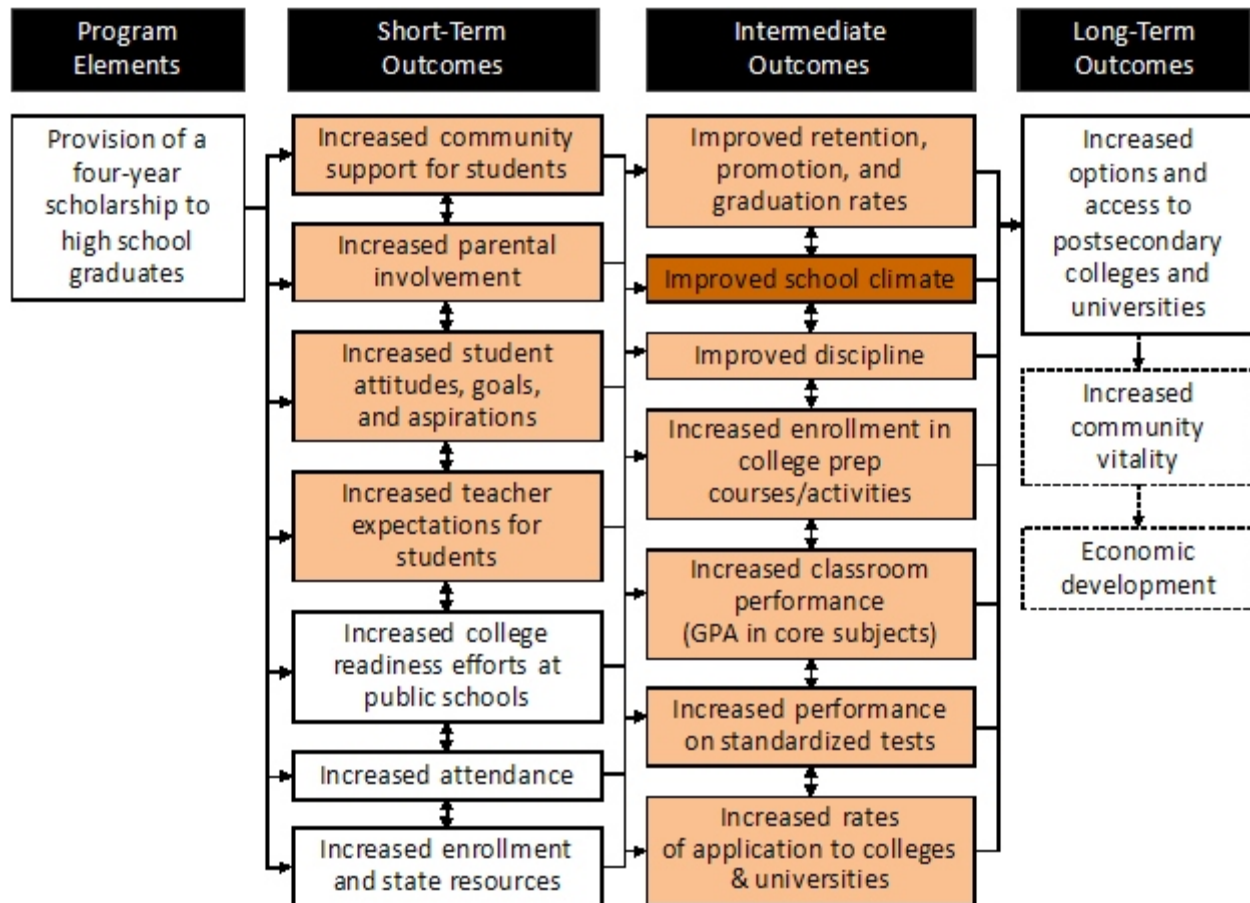


Figure 1. Outcomes Logic Model for the Evaluation of the Kalamazoo Promise

Social-psychological attributes of the school (such as school members' shared ideologies, values, norms, beliefs, feelings, and expectations for school members' behaviors and for the school's structure and operation), and how these attributes are organized in formal and informal school groups, with particular interest in their relation to student learning and achievement and to effectively functioning classroom and schools.

The research literature on school climate is extensive because of its influential role in promoting positive student outcomes (Marshall, 2009). The Search Institute found that positive school climate is associated with attendance, engagement, expectations, competence, esteem, and self-concept (Scales & Leffert, 1999). It also mitigates against anxiety, depression, substance abuse, antisocial behavior, and retention in grade (LeBlanc, Swisher, Vitaro, &

Tremblay, 2008; Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001; Battistich & Horn, 1997). Perceptions of school climate have been correlated with behavioral and emotional adjustment in middle school populations (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001). It appears that a pro-social and pro-academic school climate is particularly important for high-need youth, or those youth that have not had access to influential social advantages (Haynes & Comer, 1993; Kuperminc et al. 1997).

The school, as an ecological context, can affect the collective behaviors of students and teachers, and also affect how students engage in the learning process. Perceptions of school connectedness are related to school climate (Loukas, Suzuki, & Horton, 2006), and student perceptions of both school belonging and school climate are related to measures of student engagement and academic achievement (Benner, Graham, & Mistry, 2008). Indeed, positive school climate has been empirically linked to

increased student achievement in numerous studies (Benner, Graham, & Mistry, 2008; Brown, Anfara, & Roney, 2004; Griffith, 1999; Bossert, 1998; Hoy, Hannum, & Tschannon-Moran, 1998; McPartland, Balfanz, Jordan, & Legters, 1998; Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995). In terms of the strongest predictors of climate, individual-level factors account for the greatest variance in perceived school climate, followed by school-level, and classroom-level factors (Koth, Bradshaw, & Leaf, 2008).

Perceptions of school climate may vary based on the individuals reporting (Preble & Taylor, 2008). Administrators have a vested interest and may have certain “blind spots” with respect to issues of climate. Teachers play a crucial role in school climate, as they experience more direct interactions with students and affect peer interactions through classroom expectations and practices. Student perceptions are pivotal in understanding climate, as they spend their

school days in the midst of it. As students this study by Preble and Taylor (2008) argue, “School climate is what happens when the grown-ups are not around” (p. 36). Preble and Taylor (2008) also report gaps between student and teacher perceptions, and between college-bound students and the larger student body.

Given the associative beneficial outcomes, it is clear that school climate is important in organizational and school reform (Dellar, 1999). School climate encompasses the preconditions for positive student experience and achievement (BPB, 2004). Roeser, Eccles, and Sameroff (2000) contend that perceptions of the school climate are essential in quality education and in the developmental progression of youth. Schools with a positive relational climate, and that support students through constructive discipline models, promote a sense of connection to the school community; “It is where people want to live and work and where small and large businesses like to locate” (Rubin, 2004, p. 162).

Methodology

The logic model presents an overview of prospective changes resulting from the implementation of the Promise. The present paper focuses on perceptions of teacher-student relationships, student-peer relationships, guidance, academic orientation, and behavioral values, the relations among these relationships and the shift in these perceptions over time. We also examine how these relationships and beliefs are related to other outcomes in the model. To do this, we elicited responses from various stakeholders so that we can consider the responses from multiple data sources. This section describes the data collection, sampling information, and analytical methods used in our examination of school climate.

Sample and Data Collection for Student Survey

Within our high school survey, which we administered in May 2007 and May 2008, we embedded a sufficient number of items from a nationally-normed school climate survey that allowed us to create 6 standard subscales or factors related to

school climate. This school climate survey (SCS) was originally developed at Western Michigan University in the 1980s and was later copyrighted and distributed by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The School Climate Survey contains a total of 10 subscales, although for the purpose of our research on the Kalamazoo Promise we only captured 6.

In addition to the questions related to the nationally-normed school climate survey, we also included a number of questions that we deemed important and that related either directly or indirectly to school climate. Surveys contained Likert-type items related to students’ educational experiences and other questions related to anticipated short-term and intermediate outcomes. There were also several open-ended questions that allowed students to explain their thinking in greater depth. Surveys generally took 12-15 minutes to complete. A total of 1,893 students participated in the survey in 2008, providing a sample that is large and representative of students in the district.

Sample and Data Collection for Interviews

To further explore trends identified in the survey responses, the evaluation team conducted interviews with 42 students. Working with neighborhood associations distributed geographically throughout the city, researchers were able to obtain a sample with greater ethnic and socioeconomic diversity. Neighborhood associations facilitated interviews by hosting events or through staff nominations. Students were provided with soft drinks and pizza, and received a free university t-shirt for participating in the summer interviews. The median duration of interviews with students was 35 minutes. Of the students we interviewed, 75% were in district high schools, and 25% attended middle schools. The student interview sample was 57% female and 83% students of color. Almost 80% of students interviewed reported that they qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. In total, 90% of the students we interviewed reported that they plan on using the Promise in the future.

In addition, 12 principals, 9 guidance counselors, and 20 teachers were interviewed about their perceptions of the impact of the Promise. Interviews were conducted at the schools and lasted approximately 40 minutes, though several lasted over an hour. All high school and middle school principals, and 6 of the 16 elementary principals, participated in the interviews. They were then asked to nominate potential counselors and teachers to be invited to participate in an interview. While this facilitated the efficient collection of data, it created a non-random sample. Two counselors were interviewed from each of the three district high schools, and one from each of the three middle schools. Two to three teachers were interviewed from each high school, two from each of the three middle schools, and one from each elementary school. Twenty-nine out of the 41 educators were female (71%), and approximately 25% reported ethnic backgrounds other than European-American.

Data Analysis

From surveys of both middle and high school students to interviews with students and educators,

the data collected provided a multidimensional view of school climate. We use student survey data to describe trends in the district related to school climate. The qualitative records are used to explicate these patterns, and to provide insight into the statistical findings. This approach can yield rich findings, and is consistent with recent efforts to incorporate mixed methodologies in research evaluation so as to further understanding of programs and social settings.

Quantitative data. Using instructions from the technical manual for the School Climate Survey, we summed items for each SCS subscale and then calculated mean ratings across students. These raw scores were then converted to percentiles based on the national norms for each of the 6 SCS subscales. We also created our own factors that were more appropriate for the multivariate analysis that followed. After descriptive statistics were calculated, these factors were examined for reliability. The factors show which items “hang together” and can be used to determine the intensity of responses related to these constructs, which were largely identical to the school climate subscales, although the factors we created also covered other constructs, such as student aspirations and teachers expectations. The diverse factors we created were used to explore group differences, and using one-way analysis of variance techniques, we consider the factors in relation to student background and demographic variables. In addition, this statistical technique was used to examine differences in these constructs from 2007-08.

Qualitative data. Focused codes, based on pre-existing constructs, were used to organize the interview data. Interviews were coded for the following themes: general feelings of and attitudes toward climate; teacher-student and student-peer relations; climate and behavior; academic orientation; and college guidance. The focused codes were applied to all interview transcripts. Further, open codes were used to collect information on emergent themes or persistent patterns that were identified in analysis.

Findings

In this section we provide an overview of the findings. Three appendices contain supporting information and documentation.

Student Perceptions of Changes in School Climate

Without benchmarks or comparison groups, much of the data, especially those on school climate, are difficult to interpret. Unfortunately, administering the surveys to a comparison group of students outside of KPS was not possible within the scope of this project. We were able to partially address this limitation by drawing comparisons with national norms drawn from the National Association of Secondary School Principals' School Climate Survey (SCS). By administering our student survey twice (in May 2007 and May 2008), we were able to see change across 2 years in comparison with the NASP SCS administered

in May 2007 and May 2008. The SCS is unique in that it provides national norms on a number of constructs relating to school climate. The SCS includes 10 subscales constructs; for our Kalamazoo Promise high school survey, we embedded a sufficient number of items to cover 6 of the 10. The table below lists all 10 school climate subscales and includes descriptions of each subscale. The 6 used in our survey are highlighted with asterisks.

Findings comparing KPS high schools with national norms on the SCS are summarized in two graphs. Figure 2 compares the aggregate high school ratings between 2007 and 2008. Figure 3 depicts the results for each of the three high schools in 2008. Appendix A contains a number of tables that detail the findings when broken out by race/ethnicity and free and reduced-priced lunch status. The six SCS subscales are identified on the horizontal axis, while the scores for the district are shown on the vertical

Table 1. Descriptions of Subscales on the School Climate Survey

<i>Subscale</i>	<i>Description</i>
Teacher-student relationships*	The quality of the interpersonal and professional relationships between teachers and students
Security and maintenance	The quality of maintenance and the degree of security people feel at the school
Administration (principal, asst. principal, etc.)	The degree to which school administrators are effective in communicating with different role groups and in setting high performance expectations for teachers and students
Student academic orientation*	Student attention to tasks and concern for achievement at school
Student behavioral values*	Student self-discipline and tolerance for others
Guidance*	The quality of academic and career guidance and academic counseling services available to students
Student-peer relationships*	Students' care and respect for one another and their mutual cooperation
Parent and community-school relationships*	The amount and quality of involvement of parents and other community members in the school
Instructional management	The efficiency and effectiveness of teacher classroom organization and use of classroom time
Student activities	Opportunities for and actual participation of students in school-sponsored activities

Source: Examiner's Manual, School Climate Survey (1985)

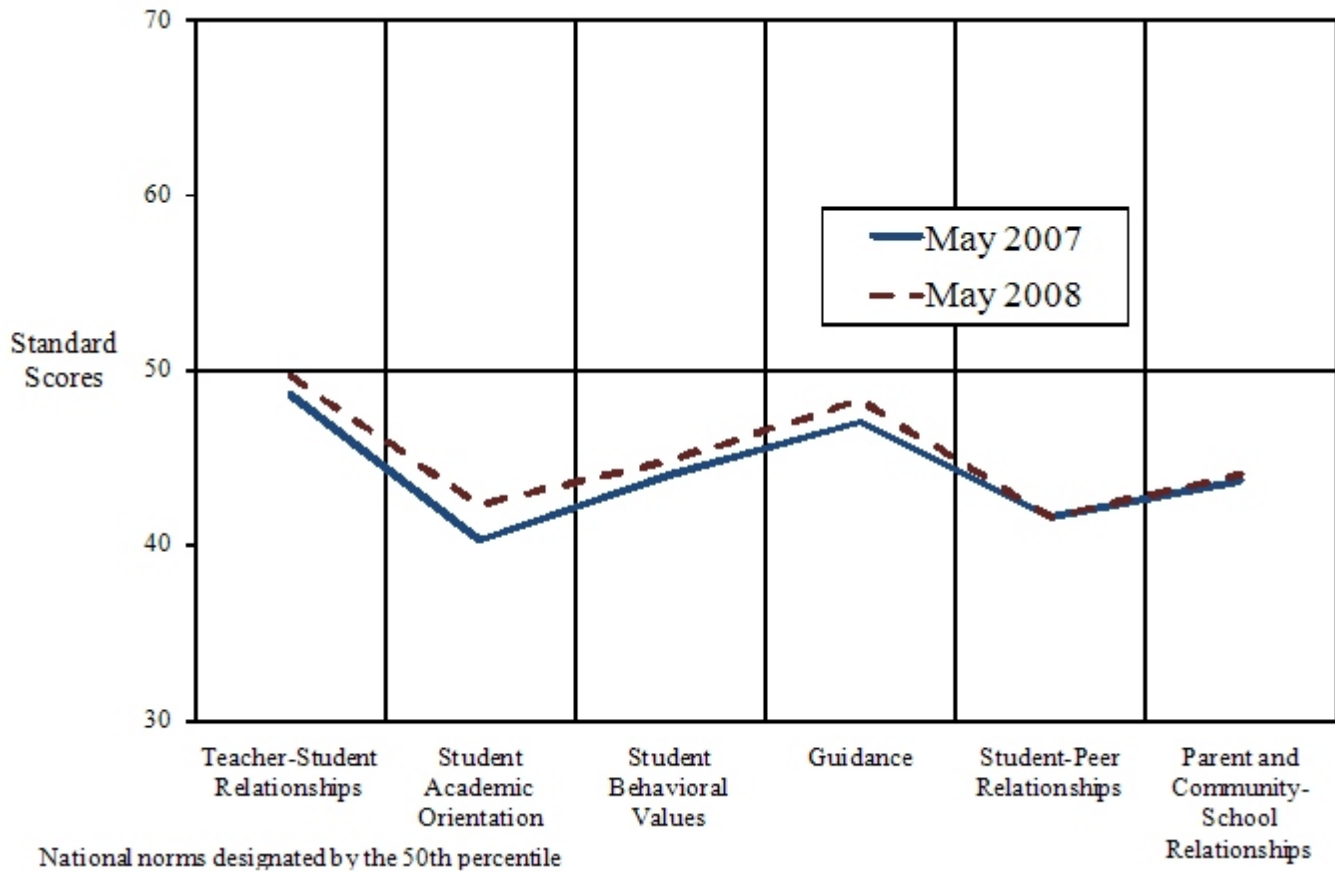


Figure 2. School Climate Results Relative to National Norms, 2007 and 2008

axis. For each subscale, the national norm is 50. Hence, points above the horizontal line at 50 indicate subscales on which the schools exceeded national norms, while points below the horizontal line indicate subscales on which the schools performed below national norms.

The national norms are based on all types of secondary schools (small and large, rural, suburban, and urban), and not only large urban schools such as Loy Norrix and Kalamazoo Central. Although most of the district results fall within the 40th to 45th percentile or below the national average, this finding is rather typical for large urban schools. What is important to note in Figure 2 is that student perceptions of school climate improved noticeably between 2007 and 2008 on 4 of the 6 subscales. There was no improvement in Student-Peer Relationships or in perceptions of Parent and Community-School Relationships.

The results in Figure 3 are broken out by school. Here one can see that the smaller alternative high school (Phoenix) tends to have higher perceptions of school climate than the two larger high schools. Phoenix had a rating similar to the other two on the Guidance subscale, and it had a slightly lower score than the other two on the Parent and Community-School Relationships subscale. Phoenix has a much smaller student population, and these results should be read with caution, as sample size may bias reported levels on these factors.

Although we do not have comprehensive baseline data on school climate in the district prior to the announcement of the Kalamazoo Promise, we do have results from the SCS instrument when it was administered at Phoenix high school during Fall 2004 and Spring 2005. When we compared this one school prior to and after the announcement of the Promise,

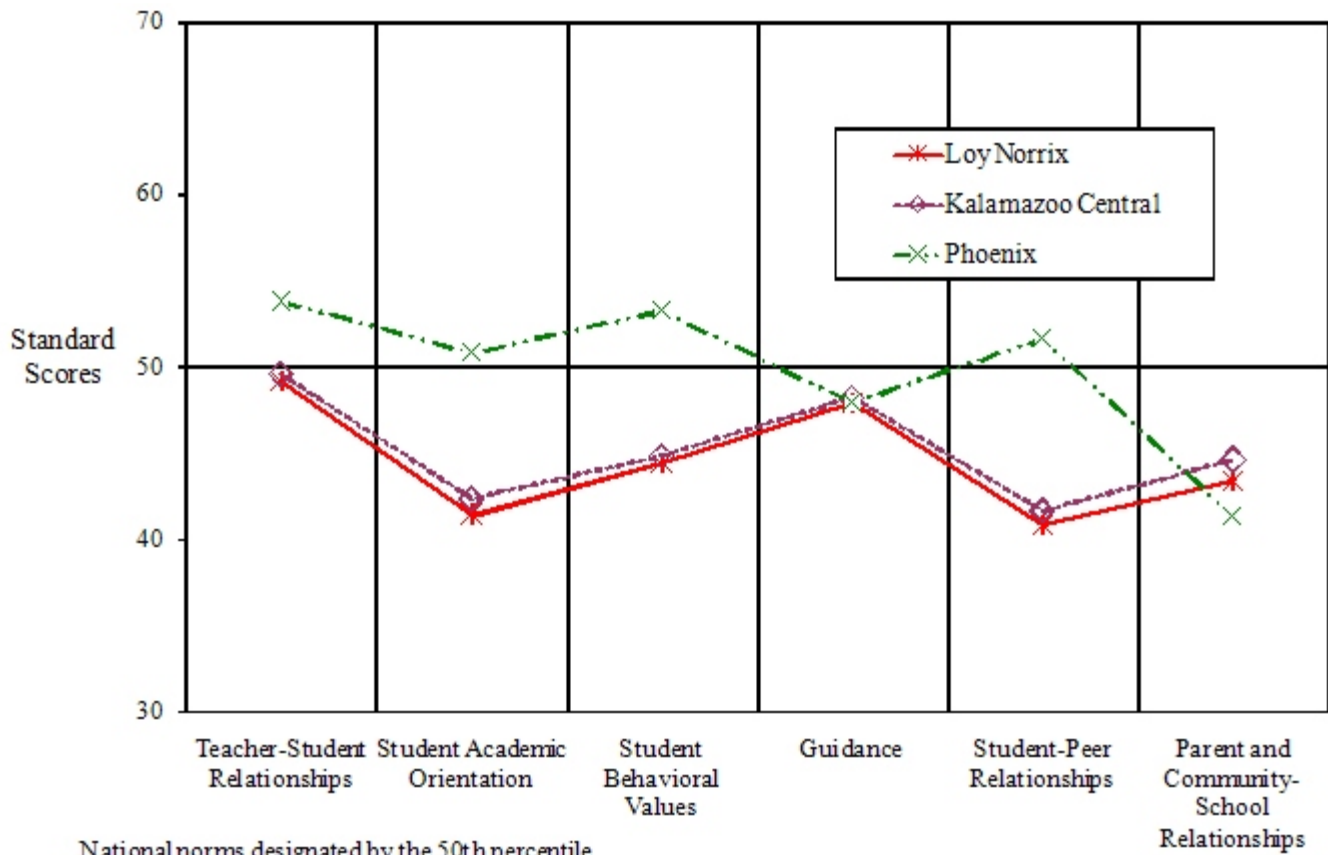


Figure 3. School Climate Results for the Three KPS High Schools, 2008

we found small but generally consistent improvement in Teacher-Student Relationships, Student-Peer Relationships, Guidance, and Parent and Community-School Relationships. Because of the small and changing samples obtained from this school, these findings must also be interpreted carefully and they cannot be generalized to the other larger high schools. Nonetheless, these findings do provide one indicator that school climate has improved after the creation of the Kalamazoo Promise.

Differences Across Student Subgroups

Statistical analyses revealed significant differences between males and females on perceptions of teacher-student relationships, behavioral values, student-peer relationships, and parent-community-school relationships. Males were more likely than females to see these dimensions of school climate as positive; whereas females were more likely than males to hold higher student aspirations (see Appendix A).

Similarly, students who participated in the free and reduced-priced lunch (FRL) programs reported having higher reported levels of teacher-student relationships, academic orientation, behavioral values, and a more positive experience with guidance than did students who did not participate in these programs. However, students who did not participate in the free and reduced-priced lunch program had statistically higher student aspirations than did those who did participate in the FRL program. While there were no differences between these two groups on student-peer relationships, the students who qualified for FRL had lower ratings of parent and community-school relationships.

In addition, students whose parents or guardian held a degree were more likely to report higher perceptions of parent-community-school relationships than those whose parents or guardians did not. Likewise, students who reported being “very familiar” with the Promise were more likely to report higher

levels of teacher-student relationships, guidance, parent-community-school relationships and student aspirations than were students who reported being “somewhat familiar” with the Promise.

Interestingly, the findings with respect to race/ethnicity were mixed. Students who identified as White or Asian were statistically more likely than were students who identified as Black to report higher perceptions of teacher-student relationships. In contrast, students who identified as Black, Hispanic, or Native American were more likely to hold higher levels of academic orientation, after controlling for such things as free and reduced-priced lunch status. Likewise, Black students were more likely than White students to perceive higher levels of behavioral values. Surprisingly, there were no statistically significant differences with respect to levels of student aspirations.

Perceptions of Change in Student Behavior and School Climate

The interviews conducted with employees and students from the school district included a combination of open-ended and closed-ended items. Among the closed-ended items, we asked the interviewees to rate the amount of change across a number of specific aspects of the school since the announcement of the Promise. Figure 4, illustrates the distribution of responses from KPS educators and students regarding their perceptions of change in student behavior since the announcement of the Promise. Based on interviews with middle and high school students, we found that 49% believed that student behavior in school had improved (i.e., Slightly positive change or Strongly positive change) since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise. Still, 35% of the students believed that there was no change in students’ attitudes about school work, and 16% reported that behavior had actually worsened. KPS employee ratings of student behavior were similar, although a noticeably larger portion of the KPS employees perceived that student behavior had not changed (42.5% for KPS educators as compared to 35% for students).

Figure 5 presents the ratings of change in school climate provided by the KPS employees. Just over 62% of the educators perceived Slightly Positive or Strongly Positive change in school climate since the Promise was introduced. Thirty-two percent did not perceive and change in school climate and only 5

percent perceived that overall school climate had worsened.

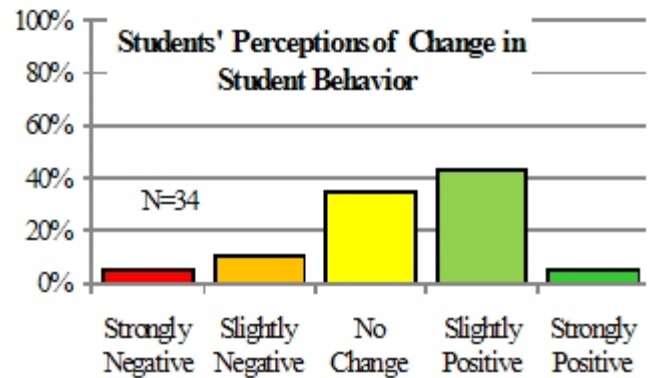
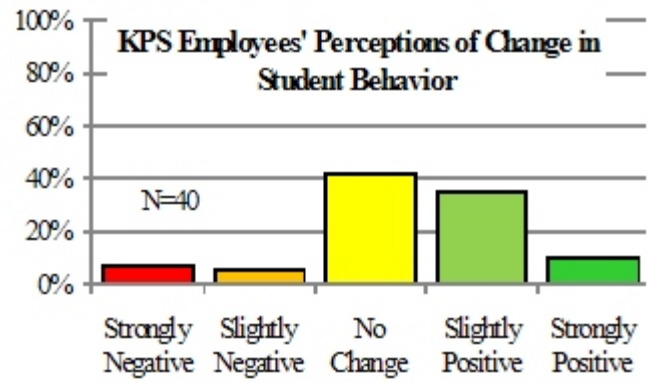


Figure 4. Perceptions of Change in Student Behavior Since the Announcement of the Promise

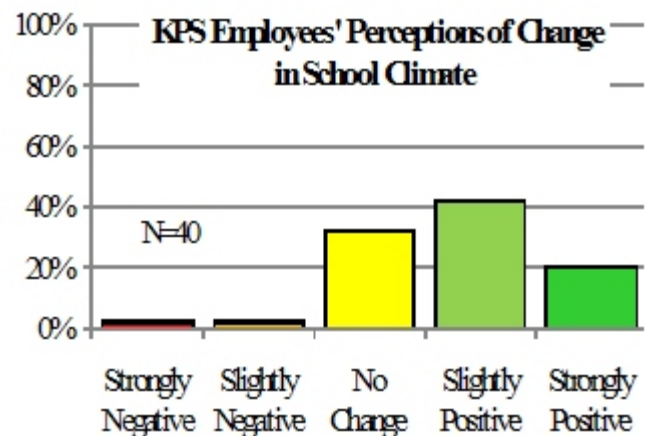


Figure 5. Overall Educator Perceptions of Change in School Climate

Figure 6 contains 3 graphs that break out the perceptions of change in school climate between the 3 groups of KPS employees: principals, guidance counselors, and teachers. Principals and guidance were clearly more positive in their perceptions of change in school climate. Whereas just over 75% of the principals and guidance counselors perceived positive change in school climate, only 47% of the teachers perceived positive change in school climate since the introduction of the Kalamazoo Promise. Similarly, while none of the principals or guidance counselors believed that school climate had worsened, 10.6% of the teachers believed that school climate had worsened since the Promise was announced.

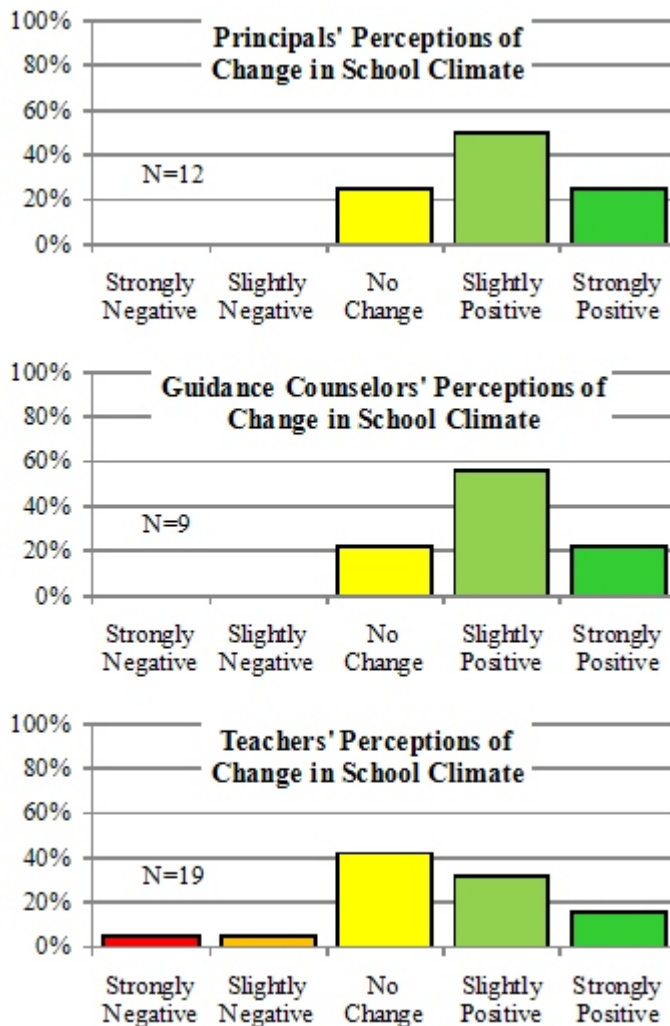


Figure 6. Comparisons of Ratings of Change in School Climate by Principals, Guidance Counselors, and Classroom Teachers

Student Perceptions of Changes in School Climate: Student Interview Responses

Students were not asked directly about school climate in the interviews, since this construct is difficult for students to understand. Instead, we asked students about behavior, attitudes toward school and perceptions of quality in relationships. The comments from students highlight certain aspects of the Promise that relate to climate. Specifically, a number of students remarked how teachers are using the incentive of the Promise to inspire changes in behavior. Also, many students note how students are trying to influence their peers' academic behaviors. Below, we summarize key themes that emerged from the interviews. Each theme below is followed by one or two examples of student comments. A more complete listing of student responses related to these themes is included in Appendix B.

Teachers are using the incentive of the Promise to inspire changes in school behavior:

- ❑ The way they talk about it makes me believe that they're very confident that it is for real, so that makes me want to try harder. That way if it is for real, I can take my place in getting it.
- ❑ They have encouraged us to work harder on the assignments we're already getting. They'll pull those students out in the hall but we'll still be able to hear them and they'll ask them why they're acting up this way. Now they have the Promise, they have a chance to use the thing with their lives and maybe otherwise they wouldn't be able to.

Students report on exerting their influence on peers to help them take advantage of postsecondary opportunities:

- ❑ I have to tell my friend, 'you get the Promise, why not try?' Yeah, because sometimes she has the attitude of, 'why try?' I say you should, you have the Promise, so you should try.
- ❑ At school it's like they still do what they do. Some of them don't even care about the Promise but like some of my friends that I hang out with, we all get good grades and we do school work and hang out at school, get our priorities straight. It's like something else for us to fall back on.

Student remarks about whether students have changed their behavior in the schools:

- ❑ More people want the education, want to finish college. They don't skip school anymore.
- ❑ Like kids focus more in class and ask for more help. Like some people are afraid to ask questions when they don't understand. They ask more questions now.
- ❑ No. Well, some people did. Some people just act the same. They don't clown as much. They get their work done during class.

Student comments also highlight existing misconceptions about the promise:

- ❑ I would like them to know who I'm working with and who said that the Promise is—like they say it pays for your whole tuition or whatever and you end up paying half of it. I don't know. They were saying some of the stuff and I really don't understand.
- ❑ All the money for the dorm and food and tuition, how much it would actually cost? Like of list of programs that the colleges have or whatever, like some colleges that have programs. How does it work exactly, financial or whatever, do we have to get the money from somewhere and then pay it?

Educator Perceptions of Changes in School Climate

In the interviews with educators in the district (e.g., teachers, counselors, and principals), interviewees were asked to rate changes in school climate (reported above in figures 6-9). Many individuals qualified their ratings with additional information. Further, many commented on aspects of school climate through their descriptions of the Promise implementation. In this section, we share educator perceptions. See Appendix C for additional detail on educators' responses.

The professionals interviewed in the district remarked on general or overall perceptions of school climate, as well as specific aspects of climate, such as student behavior, and academic orientation. In this section we present examples of these perceptions and

discuss themes that emerged in the analysis of this interview data.

In sharing views on school climate, educators blur descriptions of the general feeling of school climate with ideas about changes in climate. Many educators portrayed the school climate in a positive light. Consistent with the quantitative findings, though, reports were also often mixed, with many reservations about the prospect for quick changes in the district due to the Promise.

Positive perceptions of school climate:

- ❑ And so The Promise, then, has become an opportunity to reestablish Kalamazoo as being seventh grade, and you're talking about going to college, oh my goodness, that's so far away, but you know it really isn't...I'm seeing them being more honest about why they want to go, why they don't want to go, what they are willing to do to go. I think the climate has changed also with honesty and caring.

Mixed perceptions of school climate:

- ❑ [Q: What kind of changes have you experienced in your school, since the Promise was announced?] A: I think there is focus on accountability, and the urgency of ensuring that students are well prepared to take advantage of the Promise. So it has raised our level of awareness as educators. I think we have a lot of work to do, and especially in the high poverty schools. Our work is more than just preparing them academically, but also socially—to give them hope. To understand that there is a world beyond their current circumstance. So, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Negative perceptions of school climate:

- ❑ ...Then we have kids here that don't get it at all. They're so clueless about college. It is not on their radar, in their world. They don't, and even though you're trying to create that for them, in this school we struggle with a group of kids that don't have any value for learning. They're more controlled by their peer culture and the street culture and the mass media culture than they are about the learning culture.

Discussion and Conclusion

There were several persistent themes in educators' accounts of school climate. Several educators note that school climate has been affected by the influx of new families and students. These comments are mixed, as educators note both positive and negative trends in this area. Many of the comments suggest optimism that families that came to Kalamazoo specifically for the Promise may have strong pro-educational tendencies that may positively affect the climate of the schools:

Positive Impact from Influx of New Families:

- ❑ We've had people come from six or seven other states, 11 cities in Michigan, and within the city of Kalamazoo, we've had people come from charter schools, private schools... What has been wonderful is the way that the new families and the families who are here have come together and it's really interesting that last year we had over 100 more students, lots of growth, and nobody missed a beat. The kids were happy, they were learning, our achievement is going quite well. We have some pockets of concern certainly but we're doing quite well and keep after it....
- ❑ For sure discipline is way better than last year and, as I understand it, it's 10 times better than it was two years ago, so I think it's on a steady upward trend, and I think there are multiple factors all impacting that. I think again the side benefits from the Promise that perhaps don't seem to directly impact things like discipline and attitude, but they do, because we're getting kids in here who might be more motivated, and they are raising the overall level of the student body to a certain extent. So I think there are these side impacts to the Promise that actually are also helping to improve things, if that makes sense.

Many educators suggest the novelty of the Promise has passed, and offered suggestions for keeping focused on this common district-wide mission.

Novelty Worn Off:

- ❑ At first when the Promise was announced, it seemed like there were more parents gung ho and interested in that kind of thing. I think the newness has worn off a little bit more now. I think we need to get those reflectors back out and have parents realize this is important to keep talking about it, because I don't hear as much talk about it from people now as I did when it was first announced.

The results of this study suggest that the Kalamazoo Promise program, which provides graduating seniors with tuition for public universities in Michigan, has had a modest, but positive impact on the perceptions of school climate throughout the secondary schools. The Kalamazoo Promise is a systemic reform that has affected expectations of students, teachers, administrators and community members, and that has begun to affect the aspects of the school climate. Future research should continue to track students' and teachers' perceptions of school climate as students who have had an awareness of the Promise since middle school make their way through high school. The values and beliefs held by these students, along with the directed efforts of school personnel, may enhance changes in school climate.

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Appendix A

Quantitative Analyses of Student Surveys

In this appendix, we include data on mean differences in the School Climate factors across sub-groups in the school district.

One-way ANOVA, Gender X School Climate Variables

	<i>Females</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>F</i>
Teacher-Student Relationships	N=1,447 3.19 (.72)	N=1,259 3.26 (.74)	F=6.58 (1,2704), p<.01
Behavioral Values	N=1432 2.02 (.83)	N=1234 2.10 (.91)	F=5.47 (1, 2655), p<.05
Student-Peer Relationships	N=1406 2.66(.86)	N=1207 2.89 (.85)	F=19.92 (1, 2611), p<.001
Parent-Community-School Relationships	N=1281 2.99 (.94)	N=1114 3.07	F=4.22 (1, 2393), p<.05
Student Aspirations	N=1435 4.55 (.62)	N=1238 4.37 (.73)	F=50.77 (1,2671), p<.001

One-way ANOVA Free/Reduced Lunch X School Climate Variables

	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>F</i>
Academic Orientation	N=1,311 2.57 (.85)	N=1,307 2.86 (.94)	F=71.68 (1,2616), p<.001
Behavioral Values	N=1308 1.98 (.83)	N=1311 2.14 (.91)	F=21.27 (1, 2617), p<.001
Guidance	N=1,302 3.52 (.88)	N=1,307 3.62 (.93)	F=8.69 (1, 2607), p<.01
Student Aspirations	N=1,315 4.52 (.63)	N=1,320 4.42 (.72)	F=17.79 (1, 2633), p<.001

One-way ANOVA Minority X School Climate Variables

	<i>White/Asian</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>F</i>
Teacher-Student Relationships	N=1,144 3.30 (.68)	N=1,502 3.17 (.76)	F=20.94 (1, 2644), p<.001
Academic Orientation	N=1134 2.54 (.85)	N=1,463 2.86 (.91)	F=84.3 (1,2595), p<.001
Behavioral Values	N=1,136 1.93 (.79)	N=1,461 2.17 (.91)	F=47.80 (1, 2595), p<.001

One-way ANOVA Race/Ethnicity X School Climate Variables

		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean (SD)</i>	<i>F</i>	
Teacher-Student Relationships	White	1,074	3.29 (.67) ^c	F=8.08 (5, 2642), p<.001	W>B,O B<A H>O
	Black	1,005	3.16(.74) ^{bc}		
	Hispanic	233	3.30 (.74)		
	Asian	64	3.49 (.74) ^b		
	Nat. Am.	43	3.25 (.82)		
	Other	229	3.05 (.81) ^c		
Academic Orientation	White	1,066	2.53 (.85)	F=22.27 (5,2593), p<.001	W<B, H, NA B>A, O NA>W, A, O
	Black	976	2.91 (.89)		
	Hispanic	229	2.85 (.94)		
	Asian	63	2.56 (.88)		
	Nat. Am.	41	3.09 (1.02)		
	Other	224	2.60 (.89)		
Behavioral Values	White	1,068	1.92 (.79)	F=13.71 (5,2593), p<.001	W<B B>W, O
	Black	975	2.23 (.90)		
	Hispanic	228	2.08 (.86)		
	Asian	62	2.05 (.86)		
	Nat. Am.	41	2.27 (.95)		
	Other	225	1.98 (.91)		
Guidance	White	1,061	3.54 (.84)	F=3.23 (5, 2584), P<.01	B>O
	Black	973	3.63 (.94)		
	Hispanic	228	3.68 (.91)		
	Asian	63	3.61 (.93)		
	Nat. Am.	40	3.54 (.94)		
	Other	223	3.58 (.90)		
Parent-Community-School Relationships	White	966	2.96 (.91)	F=4.68 (5,2335), p<.001	W<H,A H>W, O A>W, NA O<H,A
	Black	873	3.05 (.98)		
	Hispanic	207	3.20 (.94)		
	Asian	58	3.36 (.87)		
	Nat. Am.	38	3.21 (.98)		
	Other	199	2.92 (1.01)		
Student Aspirations	White	1,071	4.49 (.64)	F=2.29 (5,2609), p<.05	No Post Hoc significance
	Black	983	4.48 (.68)		
	Hispanic	229	4.41 (.72)		
	Asian	63	4.48 (.85)		
	Nat. Am.	42	4.27 (.81)		
	Other	227	4.38 (.68)		

Mother/Female Guardian Holds Degree

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>I Don't Know</i>	<i>N.A.</i>	<i>F</i>
Teacher-Student Relationships	1,219 3.27 ^b (.71)	1,017 3.17 ^b (.72)	378 3.23 (.80)	20 3.20 (.64)	F=3.76 (3,2630), p<.01
Academic Orientation	1,206 2.64 ^c (.88)	996 2.71 (.92)	367 2.96 ^c (.89)	17 2.68 (.88)	F=12.14 (3,2582), p<.001
Behavioral Values	1,205 2.02 ^b (.86)	996 2.06 (.87)	368 2.20 ^b (.91)	19 2.20 (.79)	F=3.98 (3,2584), p<.01
Parent-Community School Relationships	1,091 3.07 ^{b1} (.94)	899 3.00 ^{b1, b2} (.96)	320 3.13 ^{b2} (.97)	19 2.84 (.85)	F=3.83 (3, 2325), p<.01
Student Aspirations	1,213 ^{c1, c2} 4.55 (.62)	1 000 ^{c1} 4.42 (.72)	369 ^{c2} 4.33 (.74)	19 4.38 (.69)	F=12.32 (3, 2597), p<.001

Post Hoc test Bonferroni significance ^a p<.05, ^b p<.01, ^c p<.001

Father/Male Guardian Holds Degree

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>I Don't Know</i>	<i>N.A.</i>	<i>F</i>
Teacher-Student Relationships	981 3.27 (.71)	1092 3.19 (.73)	487 3.24 (.77)	66 3.06 (.72)	F=3.21 (3, 2622), p<.05**
Academic Orientation	969 2.63 ^c (.89)	1071 2.71 ^b (.91)	477 2.89 ^{b, c} (.89)	62 2.59 (.92)	F=9.27 (3, 2575), P<.001
Guidance	966 3.56 (.88)	1068 3.57 (.93)	471 3.65 ^a (.89)	65 3.29 ^a (1.02)	F=3.35 (3, 2566), P<.05
Student-Peer Relationships	959 2.77 (.86)	1048 2.68 (.86)	466 2.74 (.85)	65 2.51 (.78)	F=3.17, (3, 2534), P<.05**
Parent-Community School Relationships	890 3.10 ^c (.92)	956 2.95 ^{a, c} (.96)	419 3.11 ^a (.97)	57 2.73 (1.03)	F=6.34 (3, 2318), P<.001
Student Aspirations	973 4.57 ^c (.61)	1075 4.44 (.70)	480 4.38 (.71)	66 4.21 (.94)	F=14.08 (3, 2590) P<.001

Post Hoc test Bonferroni significance ^a p<.05, ^b p<.01, ^c p<.001

** no post hoc significance found

Appendix B

School Climate: Student Interview Responses

Students were not asked directly about school climate in the interviews. Their comments however, highlight certain aspects of the Promise that relate to climate. Specifically, a number of students remarked how teachers are using the incentive of the promise to inspire changes in behavior. Also, many students note how students are trying to influence their peers' academic behaviors.

Teachers are Using the Incentive of the Promise to Inspire Changes in School Behavior:

- Yeah. It got worse, didn't get better. Like two years ago before the Promise was, like everybody would come to school, everybody come to school. Yeah, they're really strict now. Like some teachers they're like they're mad at you for no reason and as soon as you're out of class, so basically you're really not in class they'll help you. Behaving, like stop talking or something, but if you're not doing your work you still get in trouble, like not reading out loud. We actually read.
- The teachers are more strict. Instead of letting us just get away with stuff they are all on us. Yes. They want us to go to college.
- Well, they were not happy with the grading system either, but other than pushing harder to get more people to succeed not much else. Yeah, they keep on going to the point that if you don't succeed here, you won't be able to go for the Promise.
- The teachers are enforcing more and I guess kids actually want to go to college because it's free now and they don't have to pay for it. I guess that's it. They work a little bit harder. They encourage you more to get good grades and they help out a little more... Well first when it first came out, they really talked about it and how it's a good opportunity and you can go there for few if you get the good grades, and now every once in a while they do that. If you fall behind, they talk about it some more.
- The way they talk about it makes me believe that they're very confident that it is for real, so that makes me want to do harder and try harder. That way if it is for real, I can take my place in getting it.
- Yes, I do. There are some people who feel like they want to give up and then will someone and they'll be like hey, no, you should do this. You can actually do it.
- They have encouraged us to work harder on the assignments we're already getting. They'll pull them out in the hall but we'll still be able to hear them and they'll ask them why they're acting up this way. Now they have the Promise, they have a chance to use the thing with their lives and maybe otherwise they wouldn't be able to. Maybe the teacher is aware of their family situation and the kids understand but yet they continue this.
- Yeah, they bring it up a lot, like in my individual classes we go over stuff like qualifications and things you need to do to get there. Sometimes we bring it up like somebody is joking off. I know the teacher knows is just messing around, but some of them just be like you're not gonna be able to use the Promise if you keep on joking around like this, so it comes up but not really pressed.
- I think the group that I'm in the Promise Coaching with a lot of the kids I think that we are going and getting a lot out of it because the person who is running it he's always making sure that we're visiting this college and that we're learning stuff and he's making sure that we're learning it. Like he'll give us an assignment about the college and stuff to make sure that we understand and if we don't, he'll ask the person to explain it to us.
- Yeah. Actually teachers encourage students to come after school to get help because they see that they failed a test or they're not doing well on this certain standard or anything, and they say come in after school or come in during lunch and I'll try to help you more.

- ❑ I guess--you know, grownups come in and do work. Basically art classes and stuff parents come in and compliment us and oh, you're doing good instead of being out in the streets shooting and trying to be bad. That makes me and my friends and other people feel good because people are paying attention in this world instead of worrying, about art and drama, we're doing good.

Students Report on Exerting Their Influence on Peers to Help Them Take Advantage of Postsecondary Opportunities:

- ❑ Yeah, like if we get in trouble we try to keep each other out of trouble so that we can go to college.
- ❑ It's me and my cousin. She's like in the group with us. We are the more mature people in our group so normally we'll get them in control, come on you guys, we gotta be done with this. We need to get out of high school. Sometimes she has to put me in check, too, because I'll start acting goofy and stuff and I'll get suspended and in a lot of trouble and I do not need that. Yeah, we help each other out. Our friends help us out, too, sometimes.
- ❑ Yeah, I kinda notice that. I know the younger kids...I used to try to push them to get good grades so their GPA can be high so they can use the money, the Promise, and go to school to further their education. A lot of kids just think you graduate from high school. It's a big deal but now it's not really.
- ❑ I have to tell my friend you get the Promise, why not try. Yeah, because sometimes she has the attitude of why try. I say you should, you have the Promise, so you should try.
- ❑ At school it's like they still do what they do. Some of them don't even care about the Promise but like some of my friends that I hang out with, we all get good grades and we do school work and hang out at school, get our priorities straight. It's like something else for us to fall back on.
- ❑ Yeah, like if we get in trouble we try to keep each other out of trouble so that we can go to college.
- ❑ There are some people who feel like they want to give up and then will someone and they'll be like hey, no, you should do this. You can actually do it.
- ❑ I have to tell my friend you get the Promise, why not try. Yeah, because sometimes she has the attitude of why try. I say you should, you have the Promise. So you should try.
- ❑ Yeah. We're mostly serious most of the time. There's a couple that might slip up a little bit and then we just push him to do better.
- ❑ Yeah, me and my friends we make sure that we're on top of our grades and stuff like that and on the basketball team you have your whole team and you have to be above like every team we have to be above a certain grade point average. If one person wasn't, we would have to--if somebody was like doing real bad in math and someone else had an A in that class, it would be the person who had A's job to tutor that person so that was a big thing. A lot of my friends that I know who weren't doing so good when we were younger, they're making changes now and it's like because it's more important to them and they're starting to realize that it's a big thing.

Student Remarks About Behavior in the Schools:

- ❑ I know at Central last year we had a couple of riots when there was a whole bunch of fights and a lot going on at one time. I know for me I'm like a drama queen person so it's pretty easy for me to stay clear, but when drama approaches me I know how to walk around it or deal with it.
- ❑ Yes, more people don't want to get kicked out of school for doing stupid things, so they try to stay in school so they can get the Promise and they can go to college and they can better themselves.
- ❑ I'm not sure. I don't know if I've noticed an exact change in the behavior since the Promise came out but I feel like everyone is probably more determined and there's a lot more people that are going to college, I know that. It's opened a lot of options for a lot of people. I'm not sure if it's directly affected how they do as far as high school goes

- ❑ I think it's gotten better, like maybe a 4. Yeah, like I said they focus more in school. They don't come into class loud and throwing paper and stuff like that.
- ❑ There's stuff in class like not coming to class and fighting, a lot of fighting. Yeah, in class, in the halls.
- ❑ There's so many students, so many fights. They're always fighting. I don't know. It's a whole—it's a game with the north side and the south side. I don't know what you could do to stop that.
- ❑ I think so. I mean, I've heard a lot less talk about dropping out and skipping school, so I guess you can say people are changing.
- ❑ Well, they feel like a lot of students still hate school and they still have attitudes like I really don't want to be here but because they know it's what they need they do it. They make themselves do it because they know they need it. Their attitudes and their thoughts about school don't change.
- ❑ No, they just ain't the way they act when it's time they change but they act the same way. I don't know, just they act the same to me. They're serious but they still act the same way, not as they just don't care. They care more now they have some way to pay for college and all that.
- ❑ More people they want the education, want to finish college. They don't skip school anymore.
- ❑ Like kids focus more in class and ask for more help. Like some people afraid to ask questions when they don't understand. They ask more questions now.
- ❑ No. Well, some people did. Some people just act the same. They don't clown as much. They get their work done during class.
- ❑ Well, yeah some people actually now they're being more like trying to study more because their parents want them to go to college and they also want to go to college. Now my friends are different. They've kind of never been able to go because their parents couldn't afford it, so since the Kalamazoo Promise they're studying a lot more.
- ❑ Yes, more people don't want to get kicked out of school for doing stupid things, so they try to stay in school so they can get the Promise and they can go to college and they can better their self.
- ❑ My friends, not all of them. Yeah. From last year to this year I can. I see kids trying to go to class more. Some people just don't go to class. I see a lot more people just trying to attend class more.

Student Comments Also Highlight Existing Misconceptions About the Promise:

- ❑ I would like them to know who I'm working with and who said that the Promise is like they say it pays for your whole tuition or whatever and you end up paying half of it. I don't know. They were saying some of the stuff and I really don't understand.
- ❑ All the money for the dorm and food and tuition, how much it would actually cost. Like of list of programs that the colleges have or whatever, like some colleges that have programs. How does it work exactly, financial or whatever, do we have to get the money from somewhere and then pay it?

Appendix C

School Climate: Educator Interview Responses

Positive Perceptions of School Climate:

- ❑ Part of it is in fact in supporting the school, working with the school I think is huge because I think just philosophically and just by the idea that word of mouth is that feeling, that spirit of the school, feeling good about your school, feeling invested in your school, being positive about your school. That in itself is a huge thing. Once again, the community that includes the parents and the school are all on the same page. We're all working towards the same thing. That's the first piece.
- ❑ School climate--the Promise is not the only change. I think overall there's a pride. I think there's more increased pride in being a student because I think the kids see it as much more of an equal status perception. They're getting a high school diploma also and they get the Promise also. They get to go to college also.
- ❑ And so The Promise, then, has become an opportunity to reestablish Kalamazoo as being a positive place to be, a good place to be. And it still is. Even without The Promise, Kalamazoo is a great place, but, it has done its work, I think, in waylaying some of the negative press.
- ❑ In seventh grade and you're talking about going to college. Oh my goodness, that's so far away, but you know it really isn't...I'm seeing them being more honest about why they want to go, why they don't want to go, what they are willing to do to go. I think the climate has changed also with honesty and caring.
- ❑ [Q: What kind of changes have taken place in your school since the Promise was announced?] A: I think that we're inoculating the culture about what it takes and what we have to do, education so you can actually stay in school and pass and be eligible for the Promise; not only with the school but the parents. I think as teachers we need to know what to do to inoculate and to reach and teach students and the community about yes, it's a really great gift but there's things that you have to be doing. There has to be reciprocity. There has to be things every year that you have to be working towards.

Mixed Perceptions of School Climate:

- ❑ Our school climate I'd say we've got great points and then we've got some room to improve. But you know what? I got to tell you in 20 years we had room to improve 20 years ago, too, so it's just--I think right now we've ipod troubles, we've got cell phone problems. The technology has changed. I remember we didn't have those things to contend with before. Most kids are just great kids.
- ❑ It fits really well with the structure of trying to move ahead, with excellent learning happening and excellent behavior and climate here. It's not perfect, we have our challenges. But we have means to address those challenges and that's what's wonderful. Does the Promise impact that? It kind of does because we're so intent on making sure kids are ready for success, that it makes you pay attention, more, to the current research and the current strategies and it helps you to collaborate more because that's built-in too. You don't shut your door and do your thing. You work with your grade-level partners. You work with your literacy coach. You work with your behavior specialist. There's lots of collaboration happening.
- ❑ At first the Promise was a catalyst in them wanting to get good grades, wanting to apply themselves, wanting to be successful in their academics but after a while that honeymoon period kind of left and you saw them falling back into the same routine they were in before, not turning in their work, not preparing for tests or quizzes, and I see that's where we're at right now.

- ❑ [Q: What kind of changes have you experienced in your school, since the Promise was announced?] A: I think there is focus on accountability, and the urgency of insuring that students are well prepared to take advantage of the Promise. So, it has raised our level of awareness, as educators. I think we have a lot of work to do, and especially in the high poverty schools. That we have--our work is more than just preparing them academically, but also socially. To give them hope. To understand that there is a world beyond their current circumstance. So, there is still a lot of work to be done.

Negative Perceptions of School Climate:

- ❑ ...Then we have kids here that don't get it at all. They're so clueless about college; it is not on their radar, in their world. They don't, and even though you're trying to create that for them, and in this school we struggle with a group of kids that don't have any value for learning. They're more controlled by their peer culture and the street culture and the mass media culture than they are about the learning culture.
- ❑ No, not at all. It's not seen. I have to say that most of my colleagues share my joy about the Promise and what it means for our kids. The day to day is that we have not been inculcated here in our culture. There isn't--I've got some little cards on my door about how to get hold of Bob Jorth. It sort of lurks in the shadows. It's funny. It's like the thing that KPS brings out and dusts off when it wants to put a happy face on everything and yet we still have kids who are killing each other, kids who are literally killing each other...The school is just what it is and the Promise hasn't really made a change for us and it isn't intended to. I'm not bitter. It isn't intended to. It isn't talked about at all.
- ❑ I'm sure there will be some other changes but as I've said, overall I think the school atmosphere and everything has been declining. I don't connect that to the Promise but perhaps that's not a coincidence...I'll hang in here for another year. We'll see. I'm not confident right now if we can overcome the culture of the city of Kalamazoo in some of its areas as well as just modern culture and the distractions and the self-centeredness that occurs. I'm sure that's everywhere. I know there are problems in Portage and other places, too. Yeah, I hate that I'm struggling with should I keep my house in Kalamazoo or move.

Student Behavior:

- ❑ For sure discipline is way better than last year and as I understand it, it's ten times better than it was two years ago so I think it's on a steady upward and I think there are multiple factors that are all impacting that. I think again the side benefits from the Promise that perhaps don't seem to directly impact things like discipline and attitude but they do because we're getting kids in here who might be more motivated and they are raising the overall level of the student body to a certain extent. So I think there are these side impacts to the Promise that are actually are also helping to improve things if that makes sense. (43)
- ❑ So, as we're working on keeping kids in class, raising the standards on their literacy and their writing skills, their reading skills and math, we're hoping that that has a direct correlation, direct effect, on the overall discipline situation in the building. I think that as a staff the expectations obviously of the Promise that we are going to continue to prepare kids, not just for high school, but, also for college. It doesn't do us any good and it doesn't do the students any good if they were to get this wonderful gift and not be able to use it. So, obviously, our standards are high, are gaining strength as we move through this process.
- ❑ ...It's not just the money. It's the academia. It's the social skills. It's the behavioral skills. All of those things as a package that The Promise help restore, I think.

Academic Orientation:

- ❑ Students do have an optimism that they can succeed, that they can have a future academically, that college is available. Particularly in the low socio-economic students. They are not writing off their future. I think it has had a positive impact. It is hard to isolate the impacts but definitely an overall positive impact. They have confidence, pleasure, pride. The entire school is moving intact down the street.
- ❑ Oh yeah, and again it happened faster than I expected it to. It didn't really take them that long to embrace it and say yeah, this is a possibility. I mean, kids that maybe wanted to go to college or had a small part of them that thought maybe that's something I want to do but just overwhelmed either academically, economically, their own perceptions that they weren't good enough to go to college, facing all those hurdles and now we have kids all over the place talking about where they're going to college... That was our major concern initially that the kids wouldn't be able to wrap themselves around the possibility that they could go to school for free.
- ❑ Some of these kids have a lot of failure behind them, academic failure and unfortunately a lot of issues that have created that feeling of it's not for me and I can't do the work, I can't do this, I can't do that. I think there are probably kids out there who still feel that way but we certainly don't hear it like we used to.
- ❑ Higher level of academic support. Expectations in this district have over the last 20 years or so decreased. With the Promise the expectations as a whole increased. We used to tolerate to a certain degree a certain level of achievement. I think as a whole the expectations have increased and with those expectations teachable expectations for our students have increased. So I think increased academic support.

Changing Demographics/New Students:

- ❑ I would say there just seems to be a lot more pride. I would say. I think there was a feeling of like the Bad News Bears KPS and I think now it's more--it's a huge source of pride that we are drawing kids from other more wealthy districts than previously. We're pulling back a lot of the kids, I understand, that we lost to places like Portage, Gull Lake, maybe even Parchment, Mattawan. Some of the kids that might have gone to another district are actually coming out of their district to come here, some are relocating. So I know that for the first time our enrollment is actually going up.
- ❑ I don't think that it's been an easy acclimation but it's been a positive one and I say that because the students who I have seen to come in here I have spoken with who have moved across the state to come to receive the Promise, their child has skills already set in place, not only academic, behavior skills as well... there are students in the class that say can you just quiet down, I want to hear this or they'll try to use their body language to let the other student know I'm not interested. They have been doing that and it's been positive for their peers because peers beget peers. They seem to be able to reach them quicker, more in depth than what maybe teachers can so that's been positive.
- ❑ We've had people come from six or seven other states. And then eleven cities in Michigan, and then within the city of Kalamazoo, we've had people come from charter schools, private schools... What has been wonderful is the way that the new families and the families who are here have come together and it's really interesting that last year we had over 100 more students, lots of growth, and nobody missed a beat. The kids were happy, they were learning, our achievement is going quite well. We have some pockets of concern certainly but we're doing quite well and keep after it... I think what it is, is that the children helped the children to feel comfortable. And they are truly interested in each other, where they've come from and what they've experienced and can share... I like the way it's drawing the whole community together.

- ❑ It's brought an influx of families outside of our current district which means that they've either moved into the district from another state or outside school, charter school or a private school to have access to the Promise. I do think that piece is very positive.
- ❑ For sure discipline is way better than last year and as I understand it, it's ten times better than it was two years ago so I think it's on a steady upward and I think there are multiple factors that are all impacting that. I think again the side benefits from the Promise that perhaps don't seem to directly impact things like discipline and attitude but they do because we're getting kids in here who might be more motivated and they are raising the overall level of the student body to a certain extent. So I think there are these side impacts to the Promise that are actually are also helping to improve things if that makes sense.

Novelty Worn Off:

- ❑ I just think we need to just keep bringing it up. I think it's fallen by the wayside in the past year. You don't hear about it in the news anymore. Of course, all you hear now are the dropout rates. Dropout rates haven't changed because of the Promise. Our dropout rates are still ridiculously high. I think we need to do something to change that. We have to keep talking about it and I need to do that more, too, keep reminding these kids about the Promise.
- ❑ At first when the Promise was announced it seemed like there were more parents gung ho and interested in that kind of thing. I think the newness has worn off a little bit more now. I think we need to get those reflectors back out and have parents realize this is important to keep talking about it because I don't hear as much talk about it from people now as I did when it was first announced.