

Figure 8.4: Success Tool—Culture Audit

Instructions: Use this tool to gather responses from staff, students, and parents. Review the results collectively, identify common themes, and develop an action plan to strengthen the school's culture.

Section 1: Core Values and Vision

1. **Alignment:** Are the school's stated values and vision clearly articulated, understood, and consistently reflected in daily practices?
2. **Shared understanding:** Do staff, students, and families have a shared understanding of the school's core values and vision?
3. **Focus:** Is shared understanding planned for, modeled, monitored, confronted, and celebrated (DuFour et al., 2024)?
4. **Anti-values:** Are attitudes, behaviors, and practices that undermine a thriving learning environment identified and systemically addressed while positive values are reinforced?

Section 2: Communication and Collaboration

1. **Openness:** Is communication among staff open, transparent, and constructive?
2. **Inclusivity:** Are all staff members, including teachers, support staff, and administration, involved in decision-making processes?
3. **Collaborative practices:** Does the school have structures (such as team meetings, collaborative planning, and a guiding coalition) that effectively support collaboration?

Section 3: Trust and Relationships

1. **Trust among staff:** Is there a culture of trust and respect among staff members?
2. **Student-teacher relationships:** Do students feel that teachers are approachable and supportive?
3. **Family and community engagement:** Are families and the community meaningfully engaged in the school's activities and culture?

Section 4: Professional Learning and Growth

1. **Continuous learning:** Are staff provided with opportunities for ongoing professional learning that align with the school's goals and their professional goals?
2. **Reflection practices:** Are reflective practices, such as peer observations and feedback sessions, part of the school's culture?

Section 5: Supportive Environment

1. **Psychological safety:** Do staff and students feel safe expressing ideas and taking risks without fear of judgment or negative consequences?
2. **Support systems:** Are support systems (such as mentorship, coaching, and mental health resources) in place for staff and students?

Section 6: Belonging and Excellence

1. **Representation:** Do the school's leadership and staff reflect the diversity of the student population?
2. **Equitable practices:** Are policies and practices in place to ensure all students have access to the same opportunities for learning and growth?

Section 7: Action Plan Development

1. **Identification of priorities:** What are the key areas identified as strengths?
2. **Areas for improvement:** What are the main areas requiring targeted actions?
3. **Next steps:** What immediate actions will the team take to address identified areas for growth?