



CLIMATE CONNECTION

*Information and strategies
linking Climate and School Safety.*

Establishing a School Vision

Climate Connection is a publication
of the NYS Center for School Safety.

What is a Vision Statement?



Establishing a formal vision statement is an important step in forming a clear and goal-oriented direction for your school. Your school's climate is directly impacted by your vision. Think of your vision as the common thread that is woven throughout all other school operations including but not limited to communications, engaging stakeholders, policies, procedures and decision making.

A coherent vision is important for establishing a clear and communal objective for the school community and can greatly impact school climate. It should be reflective of the values, direction and aspirations of a school and should describe where the school is and where it aspires to be.

A strong vision considers the voice and perspective of all stakeholders including but not limited to school staff, students, parents/guardians and community organizations. It should adequately convey the goals and aspirations of a district and be reflected within systems through communication, policies, procedures and decision making. Having a clear and visible vision statement can help promote consistency and awareness within the school community and, bring stakeholders together based on a common goal.

EXAMPLES OF VISION STATEMENTS

"Our school empowers all students to embrace learning, achieve their personal best and build their emotional, social and physical well-being."

"Our vision is to prepare and motivate our students for a rapidly changing world by instilling in them critical thinking skills, a global perspective, and a respect for core values of honesty, loyalty, perseverance, and compassion. Students will have success for today and be prepared for tomorrow."

"Our school will foster an environment to nurture individuals academically, socially, and emotionally so that they are equipped to tackle academic challenges and become productive members of society."

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How Your Vision Impacts School Discipline

Having a specific school vision helps coordinate school efforts and establish a communal goal, without one, your school may lack consistency and alignment. It is important that your vision describes the aspirational state for which your school is striving, and that the actions and decisions made at the school align with the established vision. An established vision creates clarity and direction for a school. If actions and decisions are not aligning, you may want to reevaluate your vision, your practices, or some combination of the two.

Disciplinary actions and the continuum of response should align with and uphold the desired state described in your vision. A lack of consistent responses, procedures and policies can lead to a variety of inequities, including inequitable discipline practices. Research shows that disparities in discipline can have tremendous consequences on our youth, especially students of color. Intentional steps to ensure that every student is treated equitably can help create a positive school climate where all students feel safe, supported, and are able to learn. Read more about discipline disparities from the link below.



[Read more on discipline disparities here.](#)

Tips for Crafting Your Vision Statement

Review

What is our current vision or vision statement, if any? How is it reflective of our goals and values as a school? What has changed since the vision was last created? How might it be improved? Are all stakeholders' voices represented in this vision?

Consider

What about our vision statement feels accurate or inaccurate? What does our school community value? What are our schools' goals and aspirations? How do we want to get there? What voices need to be represented? How might we invite support or engagement in creating or re-evaluating our vision? Where do we want this vision to take us?

Reflect

How are we currently working in alignment with our vision? How is our vision reflected in your policies, procedures, communication etc.? Do our discipline practices align with our vision? Why or why not? How might we establish a system for continuously revisiting or re-evaluating our vision? How can we continue to align our work to our vision? In what areas could we better align our work with our vision? How? Where do we want our school to be in 1, 3, 5 years?



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VALUES FOR VISION ACTIVITY

An activity to begin crafting or revising your school's vision statement



1

ORGANIZE: Create and gather your vision team. Have them write down their top 3-5 values for your school. The chart below may help you get started.

Respect	Academic Achievement	Communication	Problem Solving
Safety	Self-Discipline	Teamwork	Accountability
Integrity	Humility	Critical Thinking	Independence
Empathy	Trust	Teamwork	Engaged Learning

2

ASK: Ask the team to discuss their responses. Why is this value important and why did I/we select it? Where there are contrasting views, ask how do we decide what is a priority for our vision? What makes this specific value a priority and why? Does this align with our current vision statement? How do we work through differing views of what the vision should include? *It is important to remember that there are no wrong answers. Creating a vision can and should be an involved process that allows stakeholders to thoroughly share, reflect and digest differing ideas and opinions in order to create the best possible product. This work will likely require ongoing dialogue over time.*

3

REVISE: Over time, work to narrow down the team's input to the top 3-5 communal values and save them to review at your next meeting. Using those selected values, begin drafting vision statements individually or as a group. Looking at models can be a great place to start, see resources below.

Additional Resources for Drafting a Vision Statement

[Creating A School Vision Statement-Unify High School](#)
[Examples of Vision Statements](#)

