

RESEARCH BRIEF

Department of Research Services

Vol. 020501

May 2002

Teachers Rate the Principals Staff Responses to the School Climate Survey 2001

Introduction. This paper is the first in a series relating data collected in the annual School Climate Survey to goals and objectives in the District Strategic Plan. In specific, this research links responses by staff to the survey items dealing with principals to personnel appraisals, FCAT performance, and free/reduced lunch status. Goal III of the District Strategic Plan focuses in part on ensuring that personnel maintain professional standards and effectively fulfill their assigned responsibilities. In service to that goal, this investigation consolidates several sources of existing data to present a snapshot of principal performance associated with measures of the school environment.

The Data. For the past several years the School Climate Survey has been administered to parents, students, and staff at all school locations in the Miami-Dade Public School System. Among all of the items dealing with the atmosphere of the school is a set of items specifically targeted to the principals. The attached graphs look at the responses to the principal items by the instructional staff at each school.

The Items. There are eight items dealing with principals on the School Climate Survey. Analysis indicated that the items are highly correlated and can be thought of as comprising a leadership effectiveness factor. The exact wording of the items is as follows:

My principal: (Items 7-14)

7. ...is an effective administrator.
8. ...represents the school in a positive manner.
9. ...demonstrates good interpersonal skills.
10. ...deals with conflict constructively.
11. ...responds in a reasonable time to my concerns.
12. ...treats me with respect.
13. ...is receptive to constructive criticism.
14. ...is supportive of teachers.

While these items are not nearly exhaustive of the dimensions of the role of the principal, they have been explicitly derived from "effective schools" literature and are generally deemed relevant to competent leadership. The recipients of the survey are asked to respond to each item indicating the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement. The 5-point scale of response categories provided on the survey ranges from *Strongly Agree* to *Strongly Disagree*.

The Respondents. This report looks at responses from the staff to the School Climate Survey administered in the middle of the 2000-20001 school year. All of the instructional staff at each school location are administered the survey. This sample is made up predominantly of regular classroom teachers, but also includes counselors, administrators, and support staff directly involved with instruction. While all staff at each school are sampled, not all return completed surveys. The response rates vary from school to school but are generally high for this type of survey, averaging 63 percent over all schools. The reliability of the ratings for an individual principal decreases as the percentage of respondents declines.

The Survey Ratings. There are probably very few principals working today who have not, at one time or another, remarked that their job “is not a popularity contest.” Strong leadership sometimes requires that principals enforce regulations that may not be well received by the staff. Additionally, mitigating circumstances beyond the control of the principal can sometimes have a profound impact on the climate at the school. For these reasons and others, it would not be wise to judge a principal on the basis of these ratings alone.

If one represents the ratings by *Strongly Agree* = 5 to *Strongly Disagree* = 1, the overall average of all the items for any given principal ranges from 4.90 (almost all *strongly agree* or indicative of a favorable opinion) to 2.08 (more respondents on the *disagree* side than on the *agree* side or indicative of an unfavorable opinion). The percentile standing for individual principals corresponding to selected average ratings are provided below.

Percentiles Scores	100 to 90 4.90 to 4.66	90 to 80 4.66 to 4.52	80 to 70 4.52 to 4.39	70 to 60 4.39 to 4.28	60 to 50 4.28 to 4.15
Percentiles Scores	50 to 40 4.15 to 3.97	40 to 30 3.97 to 3.85	30 to 20 3.85 to 3.69	20 to 10 3.69 to 3.50	10 to 0 3.50 or less

The Graphs. There are four graphs that are presented in this report. The first presents the average ratings of the principals by the instructional staff. The great majority of the ratings are in the *Agree* to *Strongly Agree* divisions of the rating scale. The scores are separated into Elementary, Middle, and Senior High levels. The green linear trend line indicates a slight negative relationship between ratings and school level, with Senior High and Middle School principals being rated slightly lower than Elementary principals.

The next three graphs show the relationships of principal ratings on the School Climate Survey to personnel evaluations of the principals, FCAT performance grades assigned by the State, and the school percent of students receiving free and reduced lunch. In each case, the green linear trend line suggests a moderate relationship. The number of comparisons in the table concerning personnel evaluations of principals, are less than the total for the School Climate Survey because the evaluation for some principals were not completed in time for inclusion in the data base.

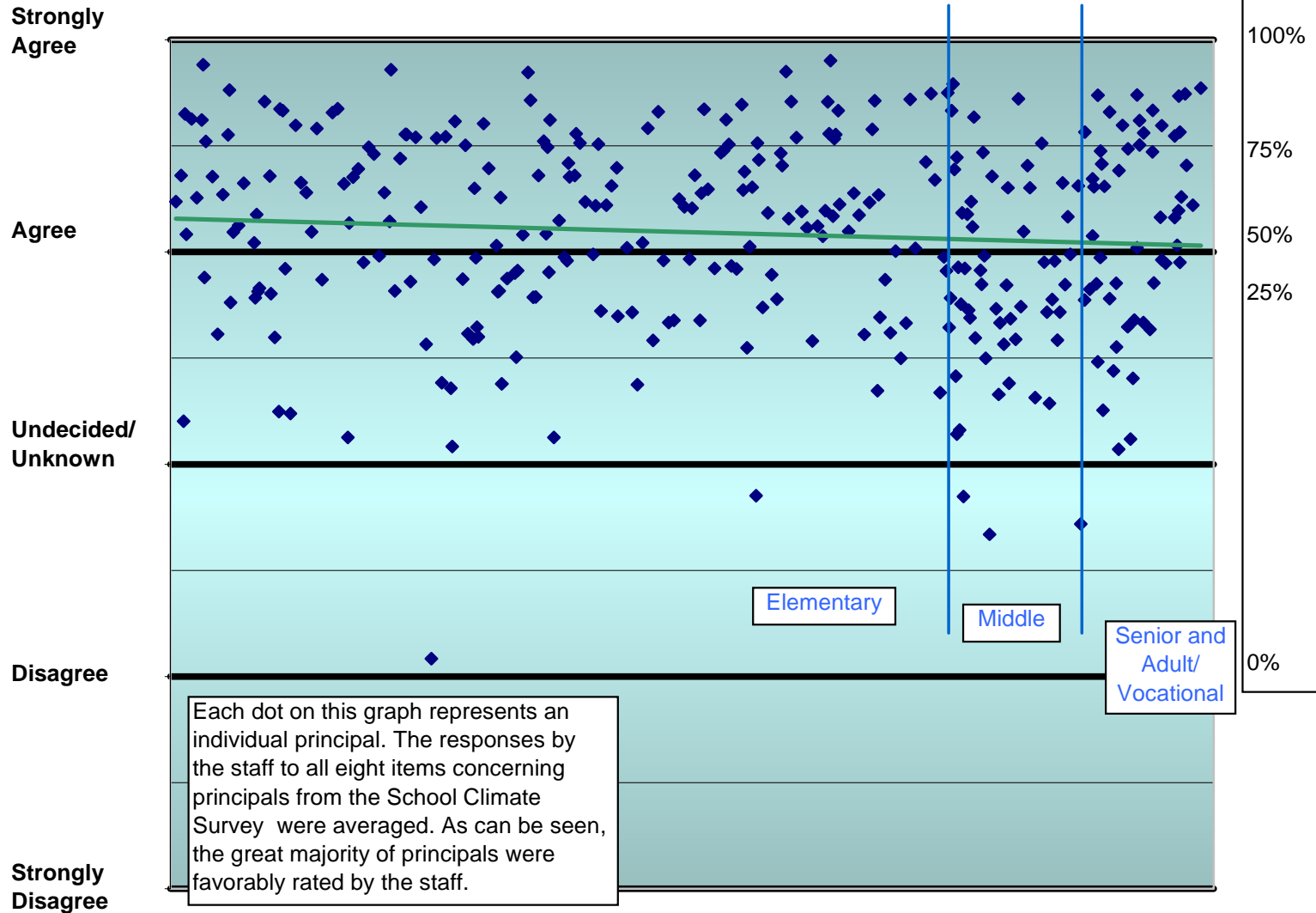
Lower principal assessments by the staff are associated with

- lower personnel evaluations,
- lower performance grades, and
- higher percent of free/reduced lunch.

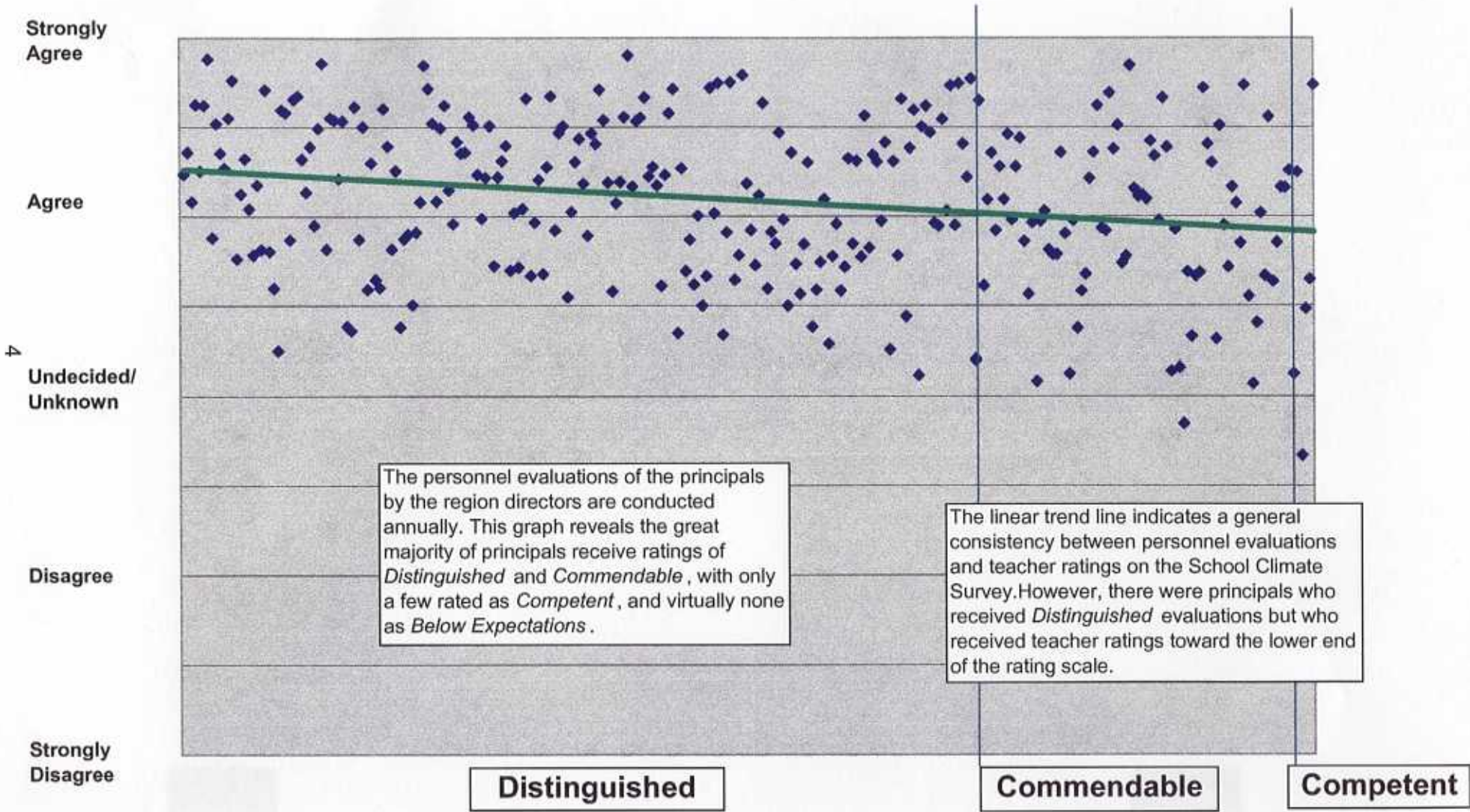
Average Ratings of Principals by Staff

School Climate Survey 2000-2001

Percentile Standing



Teacher Ratings by Personnel Evaluations



Teacher Ratings by FCAT Performance Grade

51

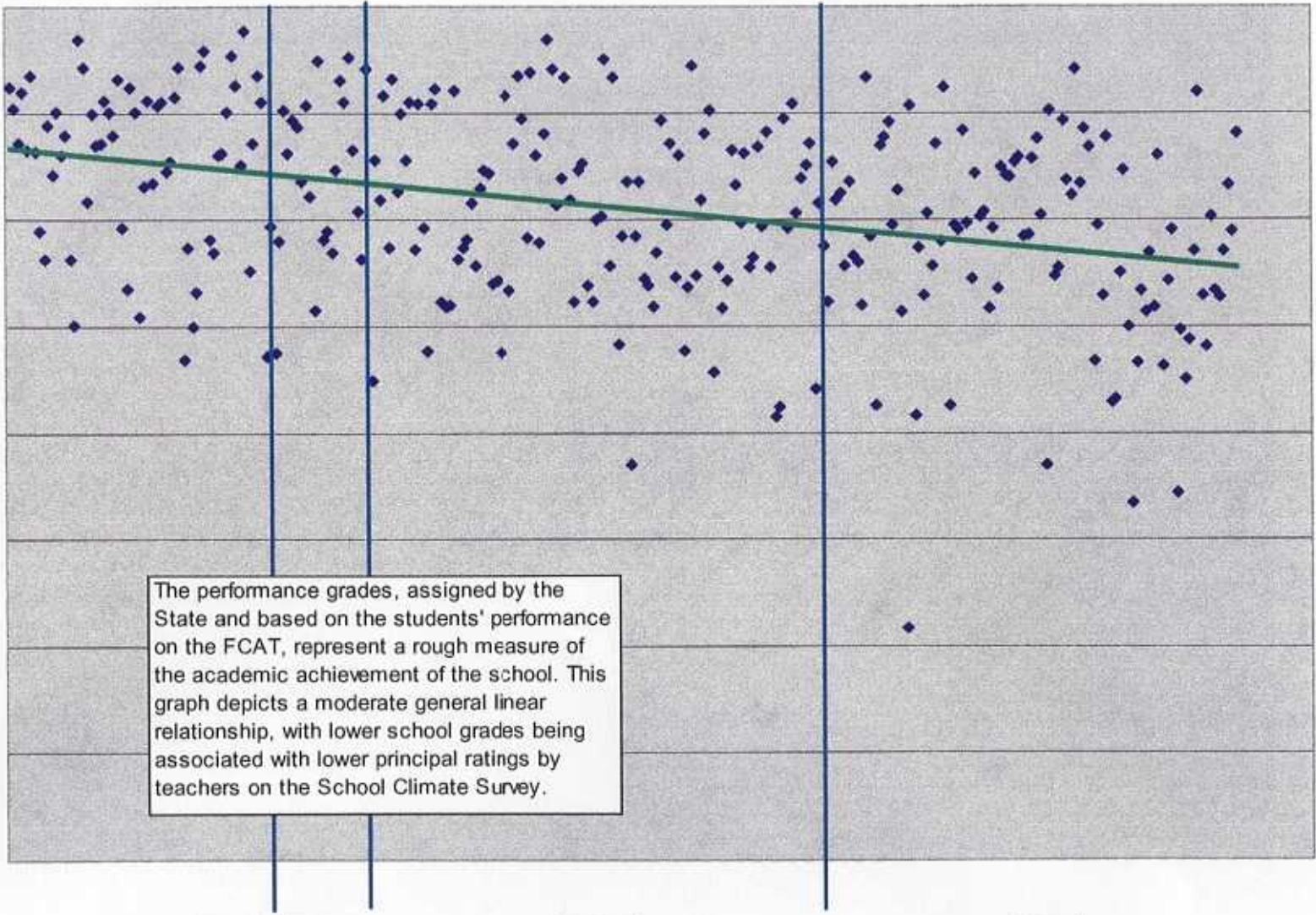
Strongly Agree

Agree

Undecided/
Unknown

Disagree

Strongly Disagree



The performance grades, assigned by the State and based on the students' performance on the FCAT, represent a rough measure of the academic achievement of the school. This graph depicts a moderate general linear relationship, with lower school grades being associated with lower principal ratings by teachers on the School Climate Survey.

A

B

C

D

Teacher Ratings by Percent Free/Reduced Lunch

