

Am I in a Toxic Culture?

Overall...

1. Teachers conduct routine, boring classes.
2. Staff obsess about enforcing rules about student behavior.
3. There's a focus on unimportant outcomes.
4. Concern is expressed only about small groups of students (often elite students such as advanced band students, gifted and talented students, or athletes).
5. Teachers are siloed in classrooms, departments, or grade levels.
6. Staff organize into antagonistic camps.
7. Staff perpetuate negative attitudes toward students and work.
8. Staff are disengaged and just go through the motions.
9. Students are disengaged and just go through the motions.
10. Faculty meetings are hostile.
11. Anyone who tries to improve the school culture is attacked.
12. Old grudges between people are right below the surface and explode easily.
13. Negative stories are told about kids, parents, the past, the current leader, and the district.
14. Students are seen as a burden.
15. In the staff room, negative stories are told about students.
16. Gossip is rampant.
17. The good old days are talked about.
18. A this too shall pass attitude is expressed about new initiatives, programs, or leaders.
19. The heroes are those who oppose change.
20. Teachers arrive just as school starts and leave right when it ends.

Exhibit 13.2. © Elena Aguilar, *The Art of Coaching Teams: Building Resilient Communities that Transform Schools*. Jossey-Bass, 2016.