



# Leadership Guide

## School Climate

The School Climate Leadership Guide is a reflective support tool grounded in the Program Review Rubric ratings that helps leaders assess schoolwide climate, identify patterns across settings, guide coaching and professional learning, and strengthen consistent, inclusive, and Deaf-centered practices over time. This guide supports leaders in moving school climate from individual effort to shared, sustainable practice.

### KEY COMPONENTS:

- Communication Access Across All Settings
- Respect and Inclusion
- Respect for Deaf Knowledge and Experience
- Leadership Vision, Modeling, and Accountability

# Improvement Recommendations by Rating Level

## IF YOUR PROGRAM IS EMERGING:

- Introduce the School Climate components explicitly to all staff
- Clarify what “communication access” means beyond classrooms (meetings, PD, common spaces)
- Name expectations for respectful language, behavior, and inclusion
- Begin observing climate patterns across settings without evaluating individuals
- Identify where Deaf experience is missing or underutilized in decision-making

### Leadership Move:

Move from implicit values to explicit expectations.

## IF YOUR PROGRAM IS DEVELOPING:

- Establish shared norms for ASL/English use across the school day
- Use a common reflection or walkthrough tool to examine climate across settings
- Address inconsistencies in communication access and inclusion
- Intentionally involve Deaf professionals where expertise aligns
- Begin documenting trends related to student belonging and participation

### Leadership Move:

Replace variability with shared practice so student experience is not dependent on setting or adult.

## IF YOUR PROGRAM IS PROFICIENT:

- Strengthen consistency of communication access in all schoolwide contexts
- Ensure Deaf knowledge and experience meaningfully inform leadership decisions
- Use climate data (student voice, observations, feedback) to guide PD and coaching
- Align school climate expectations with instruction, leadership, and identity work
- Ensure new staff and substitutes understand climate norms and expectations

### Leadership Move:

Shift from generally inclusive to intentionally equitable.

## IF YOUR PROGRAM IS EXEMPLARY:

- Use school climate practices as models for training and mentoring others
- Engage staff and students in refining norms, tools, and expectations
- Track impact on:
  - Student belonging and agency
  - Communication access across settings
  - Staff alignment and accountability
- Share effective practices with other programs or districts
- Regularly revisit expectations to sustain excellence through change

### Leadership Move:

Steward the climate so inclusion, access, and Deaf-centered practice endure beyond individuals.