



## School Climate & Faith Engagement Research Project



### Key Questions

- What can Adventist Schools in the South Pacific Division do to enhance students' engagement in a personal faith journey?
- What is the nature of the relationship between school climate and the faith engagement of students?
- What can schools do to continue building positive school climate and to encourage the growth of faith in our students.



### Findings - highlights to-date

- A significant relationship exists between school climate and student faith engagement;
- student-teacher relationships, school connectedness, safety & discipline and academic support, are particularly significant school climate factors;
- when addressing misbehaviour, students particularly appreciate teachers who are very clear in their expectations, provide appropriate warnings, stay calm, do not embarrass them in front of the class, who do not punish the whole class for the actions of a few and who show that they genuinely care;
- student perception of parental interest in their faith has a significant impact on their attitudes to faith.

In developing faith, students particularly respond to;

- staff taking a personal interest in them;
- teacher authenticity, approachability and relatability;
- having a safe place to be open, honest and to explore;
- respect for their personal journey, i.e., 'no pressure';
- staff sharing their personal journey;
- authentic stories from other people;
- relevant and engaging discussions & activities with strong student involvement;
- fellow students sharing and leading;
- faith growing opportunities outside the usual school environment and/or curriculum;
- opportunities for service.



## In brief

### Participating Schools

25 Adventist Schools in Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga & Vanuatu.

### Participants

Year 4-12 students in participating schools  
Year 5-13 (NZ schools)

### Data Collection

Surveys  
Focus Groups (semi-structured)

### Survey Instruments

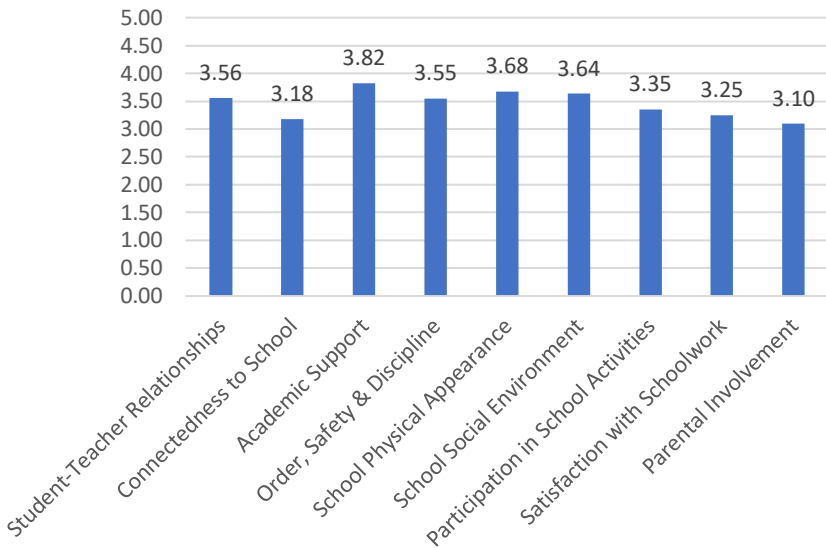
School climate scales (x9)  
School satisfaction scale  
Faith engagement scales (x4)

### Institutions Contributing

Avondale University  
Andrews University (USA)  
West Virginia University (USA)



## School Climate Survey 2023



This bar chart displays the averages across all nine school climate variables – aggregated from participating schools (out of a possible maximum of 5).

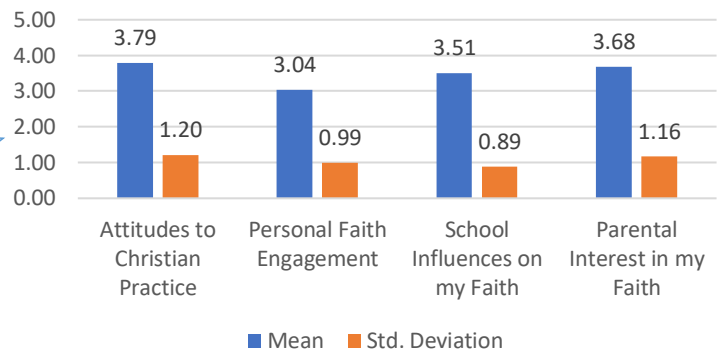
The first four variables have a particularly strong impact and vary from 3.18 (connectedness to school) to 3.82 (academic support).

Participating schools are welcome to request data specific to their individual school.

Likewise, this next graph displays the average scores across all schools from the Faith Engagement scales. These range from 3.04 (personal faith engagement) to 3.79 (attitudes towards Christian practice).

Data specific to individual schools is available upon request.

## Faith Engagement Survey 2023



Structural equation modelling is one way of exploring the impact that some variables have on others. The model below shows the impact that four of the School Climate variables have on Faith Engagement. The value of 0.6 illustrates that as school climate grows in a positive direction, so does the willingness of students to engage in faith activities. [i.e. For every standard deviation that these school climate variables change, students' faith engagement also changes by 0.6 of a standard deviation.]

