

OILS – Operation I Like School

Many of today's children do not endorse that they like school or that they want to go to school. At my office I have not had many children tell me they like school past age 7.

In a nationwide survey of 21,678 U.S. high school students, researchers from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Yale Child Study Center found that nearly **75%** of the students' self-reported feelings related to school were negative. That study also concluded that students are tired and bored, and need more sleep. Jan 30, 2020

Children and teens are in school for the majority of their waking hours (35 hours plus per week) from ages 4-18. How they feel about where they are most of their days effects how they feel in general.

Proposed steps in Middle, Junior High, and High Schools in Wisconsin to improve likeability in schools:

1. Collect data from students 2x per year, including How much do you like school? 1-9, How much do you want to go to school? 1-9, What could make going to school better for you? (see School Likeability Survey)
2. Encourage Flexibility in Schools with Policies and Regulations
 - Allow students to choose their classes and allow them to choose to be in classes and lunch with their friends
 - Allow for changing classes or sections in the event that they are near a bully or have a teacher that they do not jive with
 - Allow for other small but meaningful ways to be flexible (one small example --like allowing a child that is having trouble in the hallway to leave class 4 minutes before the bell rings so they can transition to their next class without trouble)
3. Provide a Wellness Zone
 - Provide a calming place to take a break with supervision as needed
 - Students could access this whenever needed taking a break and returning to class when they feel ready to learn
4. Making school look more like home (warm, inviting colors, plants)
5. Make students understand that we value them no matter what (no matter the academic grades or their behaviors)

Our goal would be to make changes in schooling until students overwhelmingly endorse feeling positive about school and attending.

Note: This Proposal is put together by Dr. Heather Hurd, a Licensed Clinical Psychologist and School Psychologist with a Private Practice in Wausau and Madison. She has worked with children, teens, families, and schools over the past 15 years.

Citation: Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, 2020.