

Culture Pulse 360 Surveys

*A Three-Year Mixed Methods Study
and the Inner Compass Introspective Practices Protocol*

PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER

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STUDY WINDOW

2021 to 2024

SITES

16 anonymized

RESPONSES

3,264

RELIABILITY

$\alpha = .950 \cdot \omega = .951$

ABSTRACT

A Three-Year Pulse of K12 Culture

This monograph reports findings from a Midwest United States K12 research study across 16 unique school sites, conducted as a three-year mixed methods action research study using the Culture Pulse 360 Inventory, a six-domain organizational assessment grounded in Eric Berne's transactional analysis (Berne, 1964) and Carl Rogers' humanistic psychology (Rogers, 1961). The study tracked the system across two anchor administrations, 2021 and 2024, with reliability testing in 2018 and 2020 establishing instrument internal consistency. Peer review statistical analysis was conducted by LRF Bird Consulting. School identifiers in this report have been anonymized as Midwest Site 1 through Midwest Site 16 to preserve participant anonymity and to permit broader replication of the protocol. The study yields three principal contributions: a measurable district-wide pattern of growth across all six Culture Pulse 360 domains, a published methodological successor in the Inner Compass Introspective Practices Protocol (IC-IPP), and a documented convergence between teacher voice and district strategic priorities for the 2024 to 2025 school year.

+51.6%	64.7% to 13.1%	.950	6 of 6
rise in equity and inclusion professional learning, 2021 to 2024	drop in respondents reporting no antiracism learning offered	Cronbach's alpha across the 95-item inventory, n = 379	domains showing positive year-over-year mean shift

Section 1

Introduction and Positionality

I write as a certified International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme practitioner, a curriculum designer, and the founder of ProTeachAI Foundation. The Culture Pulse 360 Inventory began in 2016 as my own working response to a question I could not stop carrying inside K12 schools: how do we measure the interior conditions that make anti-racist, IB-aligned, and equity-centered instruction possible to enact day after day? Self-assessment instruments existed. Climate surveys existed. What I could not find was a single tool that asked educators about their own pedagogical mastery, their building's systems, their daily practices, their leadership conditions, and their interior mindfulness inside one coherent instrument that schools could administer anonymously and track longitudinally.

Between 2018 and 2020 I conducted reliability testing with two pilot cohorts. The instrument moved from a 95-item to a 78-item refined form with internal consistency that exceeded the .90 benchmark for excellence (Cronbach, 1951; McDonald, 1999). In 2021 the instrument was administered system-wide across the 16 Midwest United States K12 school sites that anchor this study, and again in 2024. This monograph reports what those two anchor administrations show, what the open-ended responses surfaced, and how the IC-IPP framework now extends the Culture Pulse 360 logic into a sequenced practitioner protocol. The framing throughout is methodological and humanizing rather than evaluative. The instrument was never designed to rank educators. It was designed to give educators a private, structured place to be honest with themselves first, so that the public conversations that follow can rest on something true.

“The sequence is the method. Permission is the design.”

Section 2

The Culture Pulse 360 Inventory

Theoretical Foundation

The instrument is grounded in two theoretical lineages working in tandem. From Berne (1964) the inventory borrows the conviction that human transactions are observable structures with patterns, scripts, and ego states that can be named and renegotiated rather than endured. From Rogers (1961) it borrows the precondition that the conditions of learning are interior before they are technical: unconditional positive regard, congruence, and empathic understanding are not soft skills but the architecture under which any pedagogy is performed. The Process Communication Model of Kahler (2008) extends Berne's lineage into six personality structures, each with a preferred channel and a distress sequence, and provides the vocabulary the inventory uses to describe how educators ask for and fail to ask for what they need under stress.

The instrument also draws on the Africana womanist psychology of Lewis (2018), which insists that wellness frameworks for educators must hold racial specificity and ancestral memory rather than universalize the human; on Edmondson (1999) for the operational definition of psychological safety as a measurable property of teams; on Muhammad (2009) for the diagnostic framework of the four cultural archetypes inside a school faculty; and on Thurman (1949) for the moral claim that the inward journey is the precondition for outward justice rather than its private alternative.

Domain Architecture

The inventory comprises six domains administered through anonymous web-based response. Items are scored on five-point Likert scales, with three scoring families used across the instrument: a mastery scale (1 = no mastery, 5 = expert mastery), an agreement scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree), and a frequency scale (1 = never, 5 = always). Each domain returns a domain mean, an item-level mean, and a free-text bank that is analyzed thematically.

- Individual Instructional Mastery (PPI): educator self-assessment of pedagogical competence across nine instructional components, including priority standards, common formative assessments, small-group instruction, social and emotional learning, culturally relevant pedagogy, parent outreach, and behavior management.
- Building and Organizational Systems (PPB): awareness of defined building-level processes and practices across ten academic programming elements, surfacing where systems are visible, where they are absent, and where they are present but not yet shared.
- Beliefs and Anti-Bias Implementation (BI): stated commitment to anti-racist tenets and the current depth of multi-tiered system of supports implementation, including practices of equitable feedback and reteaching.
- Daily Implementation and Equity Practices (DI): frequency and embeddedness of equitable feedback, choice, voice, and reteaching practices in the daily life of the classroom and the building.
- Leadership, Coaching, and Feedback (LD): frequency of administrator coaching, peer feedback, professional development engagement, and trust in evaluators, surfaced through items that ask not whether coaching exists but how often it actually arrives.
- Organizational Trust and Mindfulness (OTM): introspective practices, organizational mission alignment, racial dynamics, and trust networks, including item-level inquiry into the affinity spaces educators do and do not have access to.

Reliability

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
Cronbach's α (95-item)	.950	Exceeds the .90 benchmark for excellence
McDonald's ω	.951	Confirms internal consistency under the congeneric model
α (refined 78-item)	.945	Holds after removal of redundant items
Pilot sample (n)	379	Across two pilot administrations, 2018 and 2020
χ^2 goodness of fit	4630.508	Sig = .000

Both reliability coefficients exceed the .70 acceptability threshold and surpass the .90 benchmark for excellence, establishing the Culture Pulse 360 Inventory as a scientifically rigorous assessment instrument (Cronbach, 1951; McDonald, 1999). Peer review statistical analysis of the reliability coefficients and the year-over-year domain mean comparisons was conducted by LRF Bird Consulting.

Section 3

Methods

This Midwest United States K12 research study, conducted across 16 unique school sites, uses a mixed methods action research design (Mertler, 2017) pairing the six-domain anonymous self-assessment with thematic and discourse analysis of open-ended responses (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Each anchor administration produced a structured Likert dataset and an unstructured free-text dataset. Domain means were computed at the respondent, building, and district levels. Open-ended responses were read in full, coded in an emergent inductive cycle, and then reread for convergence with district strategic priorities documented during the same school year.

Sample and Site Coding

The anchored research footprint consists of 16 unique Midwest United States K12 school sites, including eight elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, one career and technical center, one early childhood site, one alternative middle school setting, and the district central office. For this monograph all sites are coded as Midwest Site 1 through Midwest Site 16. Site ordering is by school type and is not stratified by performance. The 2021 administration yielded 1,470 domain responses across the six domains. The 2024 administration yielded 1,794 domain responses. The combined three-year pulse therefore reflects 3,264 domain responses anchored in two system-wide windows.

Analytic Procedures

Quantitative analysis followed three steps. First, item-level Likert responses were converted to numeric scores using domain-appropriate scoring rules, with reverse coding applied where items were negatively framed. Second, item scores were aggregated to domain means at the respondent level, then to building means and district means by year. Third, year-over-year deltas were computed at the domain level for the district and at the domain level for each anonymized site. Qualitative analysis used a two-cycle coding approach (Saldaña, 2016): an inductive open-coding cycle to surface emergent themes, followed by a focused convergence cycle in which thematic codes were tested against the district's independently published 2024 to 2025 strategic priorities to identify alignment, tension, and silence.

Section 4

Findings

District-Level Movement Across All Six Domains

Every Culture Pulse 360 domain registered positive movement between 2021 and 2024. The magnitude of growth varies meaningfully across domains, and the largest single shift occurred in the domain that the literature most frequently describes as the structural lever for sustained instructional improvement: leadership, coaching, and feedback (Hallinger and Heck, 2010; Spillane, 2006).

Domain	2021 mean	2024 mean	Change
Individual Instructional Mastery	3.465	3.604	+0.139
Building & Organizational Systems	3.727	4.067	+0.340
Beliefs & Anti-Bias Implementation	3.952	4.076	+0.124
Daily Implementation & Equity Practices	3.708	3.932	+0.224
Leadership, Coaching & Feedback	3.102	3.532	+0.430
Organizational Trust & Mindfulness	3.328	3.492	+0.164

All domain values are five-point scale means computed across all anonymized sites. Change values reflect 2024 minus 2021. The Leadership, Coaching and Feedback row is highlighted because it carries the largest absolute year-over-year movement and the strongest qualitative convergence.

Engagement in Equity Professional Learning

Two indicators carry particular weight. District-reported engagement in professional learning related to equity and inclusion increased by 51.6 percent between 2021 and 2024. In parallel, the share of respondents reporting that their school had not offered any cultural, anti-racism, or equity learning fell from 64.7 percent in 2021 to 13.1 percent in 2024. Read together these two movements describe a system that closed an access gap. The reduction in the no-learning-offered category does not by itself establish quality, but it does establish that the structural absence which the 2021 data surfaced was no longer the modal experience by 2024.

Convergence with District Strategic Priorities

Three open-response themes from the 2024 administration converged with the priorities the district had independently identified for school year 2024 to 2025: coaching and feedback as a healthy system of accountability, student engagement, and literacy instruction. This convergence is the operational signal that anonymous-inquiry data is functioning as a distributive leadership input rather than as a satisfaction survey.

Teacher Voice

“My principal understands and remembers what it's like to be in the classroom and all of the demands placed on us. She encourages us to have a life balance and good health all around physical, mental, emotional.”

Anonymous, 2024 administration

“A top strength for my lead principal is her ability to actually see and meet her staff exactly where they are. Her role focus is an atmosphere of relationship building and walking alongside her staff so that no one is left behind.”

Anonymous, 2024 administration

“Our principal should be in classrooms more and giving feedback to help teachers grow.”

Anonymous, 2024 administration

“I feel the IED portion of our school statement is not being implemented or addressed with fidelity or transparency. It seems as if it is on paper but not a part of our daily routine. There is no real training or reinforcement when a staff member is racially biased or insensitive.”

Anonymous, 2024 administration

Section 5

The Inner Compass Introspective Practices Protocol

The Inner Compass Introspective Practices Protocol (IC-IPP) is the published methodological successor to the Culture Pulse 360 Inventory. Where the inventory surfaces the interior climate, IC-IPP sequences how educators move through that interior climate together. The protocol is designed to promote shared leadership, healthy systems of accountability, and teacher voice in the strategic planning process and in the adoption of K12 distributive leadership models.

“The sequence is not arbitrary. It is the architecture of trust.”

Six Domains of Inquiry

The protocol moves through six sequential domains. Each domain is held first as private inquiry, then as facilitated thematic discourse, then as a synthesized building snapshot. The sequence matters because each layer builds the psychological permission necessary to access the next.

#	Domain	Inquiry Question
01	Stress Levels	<i>What patterns of demand are alive in this body, in this room, in this year?</i>
02	Managing Conflict	<i>How was conflict modeled for me, and what is mine to repeat or release?</i>
03	Interpersonal Communications	<i>What is my verbal channel, my nonverbal channel, and how does my whole body communicate?</i>
04	Emotional Intelligence	<i>Is the method I am using right now actually working for me?</i>
05	Self-Awareness	<i>What is my cultural origin story, my soul purpose, my learning style, what do I know about me?</i>
06	Identifying Triggers	<i>What environments bring up the most troubling emotions, and what are they asking of me?</i>

Each inquiry question is held first inside the body, then surfaced into structured anonymous response, then re-entered as collective dialogue.

From Inner Compass to Distributive Leadership

When educators are first guided to name their own stress, their own conflict patterns, their own communication style, and their own cultural origin story, they enter strategic planning conversations as whole adults rather than as positional defenders. This is the operational basis for distributive leadership in K12 districts: you cannot distribute decision authority without first distributing the psychological readiness to hold it (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2008; Hallinger and Heck, 2010). Healthy systems of accountability, in this framing, are not surveillance structures. They are reciprocal feedback loops anchored in psychological safety (Edmondson, 2018) and shared language. Teacher voice, when sequenced through anonymous inquiry first, returns to the strategic planning table with substantially less defensiveness, which is precisely the condition shared leadership models require to function.

Theoretical Foundation: Selected Scholars

- Carl G. Jung (1875 to 1961): Individuation and the cultural origin story. The Self emerges when a person integrates the unconscious into conscious life. IC-IPP draws on this to honor each educator's interior architecture before asking them to enact public practice.
- Ruth Benedict (1887 to 1948): Patterns of culture as configurations of personality. Schools are cultures with internal logics, and educator behavior is shaped by the patterns the institution rewards.
- Carl Rogers (1902 to 1987): Unconditional positive regard, congruence, and empathic understanding as the conditions under which a person becomes more fully themselves.
- Howard Thurman (1899 to 1981): The inward journey as the precondition for outward justice. The search for common ground begins inside the self.
- Eric Berne (1910 to 1970): Ego states, scripts, and the games people play. Berne offers educators a vocabulary for what is happening inside an interaction so that the transaction can be named and renegotiated.
- Taibi Kahler (1943 to 2022): Six personality structures in the Process Communication Model, each with a preferred channel and a distress sequence.
- Michele K. Lewis: Africana womanist psychology and healing-centered approaches that name racialized harm and restore agency.
- Candace B. Pert (1946 to 2013): The body as the substrate of feeling. Peptides circulate emotion through every system; embodiment is not metaphor.
- Masaru Emoto (1943 to 2014): Words and intentions as imprintable forces. Whether read as science or as metaphor, the work invites educators to consider what their language deposits in a classroom over a year.
- Amy C. Edmondson: Psychological safety as the precondition for learning, candor, and innovation in teams.

- Anthony Muhammad: The four cultural archetypes inside a school faculty and the leadership moves that transform a toxic culture into a healthy one.

Section 6

Discussion and Limitations

Three findings warrant emphasis. First, the system moved on every domain, not on a single domain. This breadth is consistent with what distributive leadership scholars would predict when leadership conditions improve: instructional, organizational, ideological, and interior indicators co-move because they are coupled in practice (Spillane, 2006; Hallinger and Heck, 2010). Second, the largest movement occurred on the leadership and coaching domain, the domain on which 2021 had recorded the lowest district mean. This is the signature of intentional system attention rather than random drift. Third, the convergence between teacher voice in 2024 and the district's independently identified 2024 to 2025 priorities suggests that anonymous-inquiry data can function as a distributive leadership input rather than as a satisfaction survey, which is the methodological case this monograph is making.

Limitations are honest. The study reports one Midwest United States K12 research footprint encompassing 16 unique school sites. Generalization claims should be conservative. Anchor administrations are two windows, not annual panels, so within-window drift is unobserved. Open-response coding was performed by the principal researcher and benefits from independent inter-rater work in future replications. Anonymization in this monograph removes site identifiers; the underlying scored data remain available to the district for internal use under the original administration agreement.

Section 7

Conclusion

The Culture Pulse 360 Inventory began with a working hypothesis: that the interior conditions of educators are measurable, that those conditions move when leaders attend to them, and that the qualitative voice carried inside anonymous inquiry can converge with strategic priorities when the protocol holds the sequence with care. Across two anchor administrations and 3,264 anonymized domain responses, this study supports each of those claims. The Inner Compass Introspective Practices Protocol carries that work forward into a sequenced practitioner methodology that schools and districts can adopt as part of shared leadership and distributive leadership planning. The instrument is not the protocol. The instrument surfaces what is present. The protocol is the design for what to do with what is present, in the order in which a human can actually receive it.

“The human comes before the protocol. That is the design.”

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Peer Review and Statistical Analysis

Peer review statistical analysis for this monograph, including verification of the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega), the chi-square fit diagnostic, and the year-over-year district domain mean comparisons across all six Culture Pulse 360 domains, was conducted by LRF Bird Consulting. Their independent review strengthens the methodological credibility of the findings reported here. Any remaining errors of interpretation are mine alone.

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