

“Making a school ‘welcoming’ is much more than a list of things we can do. Creating a welcoming atmosphere is more an attitude than anything else – an attitude that starts right at the top.” – Deborah Harbin

We are all so busy each day but it is important to step back and realize how our school may be viewed by others. Take a moment and view your school from a parent’s perspective. Drive up to to you school, what do you notice first? What is your immediate reaction to sending your own children here? Would you? Next walk the grounds and take into consideration all of the visual components listed below. Your school should be a place that you would send your own children. A school should reflect a clean, warm and inviting environment where parents and children feel welcomed and safe. Start making a difference TODAY!

THE GUIDE TO A WELCOMING SCHOOL

CREATING AN EXPERIENCE FOR **ALL SENSES**

SIGHT

- Is your parking lot tidy and trash-free?
- Is the lawn and landscape groomed and tidy?
- Is the sidewalk free from spills and garbage?
- Is the lobby organized and clean?
- Is there trash, dust or spiderwebs?
- Is the entryway clean and is the glass free of fingerprints?
- Is the lobby furniture clean and in good condition?
- Is the Visitor’s badge in good condition?
- Is the employee attire professional and clean?
- Does your school look like a school? As in, is it child-friendly? Is there student artwork nicely hung on the walls?
- Are the hallways clean, organized and clear for people to navigate through?
- Are classrooms tidy?
- When a new visitor walks into your school, do they know where to go? Are things clearly labeled?

SOUND

- Is student discipline being handled behind closed doors/not in the lobby?
- Does your secretary answer the phone with a warm, professional tone?
- Is the noise level appropriate for a working environment?

TASTE

- Is there coffee and/or water available in the lobby for guests?
- Are there small snacks available?
- Is there is an event going on, are visitors invited to enjoy the refreshments?
- Are there child-friendly snacks available?

SMELL

- What does the school smell like when you first walk in?
- Are there any overwhelming chemical or cleaning product smells?
- If there is a foul odor, is something being done to mask it? Air fresheners in the entry wall?

TOUCH (COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION)

- Most schools require to ring a bell upon entry - what does that interaction look/sound like?
- Is there a comfortable place for guests/visitors to sit and wait?
- Is your secretary smiling and greeting people directly?
- Is your secretary facing the entryway which enables interaction?
- Is your secretary providing answers or seeking unknown answers in a timely manner?
- During a phone call, does your secretary state the school’s name, their name, and ask how they can help?
- Is all parent communication friendly and warm? (In-person, phone, email)