

**In order to ensure a strong start to 2020-2021, school systems should attend to the well-being of students and staff.**

Addressing the [well-being of students and staff](#) will require that schools:

1. Acknowledge and address the unique end and start of school.
2. Prioritize positive, intentional relationships.
3. Attend to individual students' needs.
4. Respond to student behavior with appropriate support.

This document supports the efforts of schools to regularly **assess the general climate of the school** by surveying students, staff, and parents.

### **What is School Climate and/or Culture?**

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life. School climate is based on patterns of students', parents' and staff's experience of school life and reflects aspects of school culture such as norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. While some use school climate and school culture in different ways, they are also used interchangeably. This document uses them interchangeably.

### **Why School Climate is Important**

Positive school climate is associated with outcomes such as [improved student attendance](#), [improved academic outcomes](#), and [lower rates of exclusionary discipline](#). There are also significant impacts related to student mental and physical health, including [improved self-esteem](#), [lower rates of substance abuse](#), and [better psychological well-being](#). [Schools](#) that implement programmatic interventions as a result of school climate measurements typically see decreases in harassment or bullying and increases in student perceptions of school safety.

### **Why Measure School Climate**

[Research identifies](#) several important reasons to measure school climate using valid and reliable tools including the following:

1. Demonstrate that school and classroom climate are priorities.
2. Identify structural problems, such as inequitable application of discipline procedures among demographic groups, that can be addressed with policy or practice changes.
3. Provide actionable improvement targets for school personnel.
4. Identify and support other measures of students' social-emotional skills/competencies.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of programs and interventions targeting school improvement.
6. Support equitable educational outcomes.

### How to Measure School Climate

Stakeholder surveys are the most common school climate measurement tool. The National Center on Safe and Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSE) maintains the research-based [School Climate Survey Compendium](#), which tracks “valid and reliable surveys, assessments, and scales of school climate that can assist educators in their efforts to identify and assess their conditions for learning.”

Funding sources available to school systems to support use of culture and climate surveys include CARES Act formula funds, Title I Part A, Title IVA, and, as appropriate, IDEA funds as part of a [Coordinated Early Intervening Services](#) (CEIS) plan. The following table details three valid and reliable survey systems.

Domains Assessed	Survey Audiences	Other Considerations
<a href="#">School Culture 360™</a> - Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Academic Emphasis and Excellence:</b> standards for success, support for learning, peak performance</li> <li>● <b>Holistic Development:</b> civic formation, honesty and integrity, social-emotional formation, justice, taboo topics</li> <li>● <b>Organizational Identity:</b> understanding of mission, practice of mission</li> <li>● <b>Communality:</b> collaboration, collective orientation, conflict and bullying, personal relationships, racial climate, trust, wider community engagement</li> <li>● <b>Administrative Support and Governance:</b> fair and trustworthy, shared responsibility, organization, support for teacher growth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● K-12 administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians</li> <li>● Grade 6-12 students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Web-based platform provides a personalized report outlining results in the five domains, and sub-domains.</li> <li>● Surveys take 15-20 minutes.</li> <li>● Piloted in Lafourche Parish School System in fall 2019.</li> <li>● Contact Dr. Ashley Berner at <a href="mailto:ashley.berner@jhu.edu">ashley.berner@jhu.edu</a> for pricing.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)</a> - U.S. Department of Education (ED)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Engagement:</b> cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, and school participation</li> <li>● <b>Safety:</b> emotional safety, physical safety, bullying/cyberbullying, substance abuse, emergency readiness/management</li> <li>● <b>Environment:</b> physical environment, instructional environment, physical</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grades 5-12 students, staff, and parents/guardians</li> <li>● health, mental health, discipline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Web-based platform provides real-time submission rate and case disposition reports.</li> <li>● Exportable survey results reports are available after data collection is closed.</li> </ul>

## School Culture and Climate Surveys

Domains Assessed	Survey Audiences	Other Considerations
<a href="#">ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)</a> - U.S. Department of Education (ED)		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Surveys range from 43-104 multiple choice questions, depending on audience.</li> <li>● Student and staff surveys take 20-30 minutes to complete, parent surveys take 15-20 minutes.</li> <li>● Available in English or Spanish.</li> <li>● Data stored locally (ED does not see data)</li> <li>● EDSCLS Help Desk available for support</li> <li>● Free</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)</a> - National School Climate Center (NSCC)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Safety</u>: Rules and norms, physical security, social-emotional security</li> <li>● <u>Teaching and Learning</u>: Support for learning, social and civic learning</li> <li>● <u>Interpersonal Relationships</u>: Respect for diversity, social support--adults, social support--students</li> <li>● <u>Institutional environment</u>: School connectedness - engagement, physical surroundings</li> <li>● <u>Social media</u>: Student safety from physical harm, verbal abuse/teasing, gossip, and exclusion when online or on electronic devices (ie: Facebook, Twitter, other social media platforms, by an email, text messaging, posting photo/video, etc.).</li> <li>● <u>Staff Only</u>: Leadership, professional relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Grades 3-12 students, staff, and parent/guardian surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Web-based portal provides real-time submission reports</li> <li>● Available in English or Spanish</li> <li>● Customized, comprehensive results report with graphics and explanatory text available 2 weeks after data collection ends.</li> <li>● Surveys range from 70-87 multiple choice questions, depending on audience</li> <li>● Surveys take 15-20 minutes to complete</li> <li>● Customized training workshops available.</li> <li>● Contact <a href="mailto:info@schoolclimate.org">info@schoolclimate.org</a> for pricing.</li> </ul>

### Other Resources

- [School Climate Improvement Action Guide for Instructional Staff](#)
- [Guidance for Measuring and Using School Climate Data](#)
- [School Climate Improvement Toolkit](#)