Using School Climate Data to Promote Mental Health
Frank Rider, AIR – NCSSLE (October 2018)
Healthy schools require a positive school climate that supports the social and emotional development of students and adults.

*Pennsylvania State University and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (2018)*
School climate describes school conditions that influence student learning. Positive school climate involves:

- **Engagement.** Strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community.

- **Safety.** Schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and substance use.

- **Environment.** Appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy.
Research has demonstrated that a **positive school climate** is associated with:

- Academic achievement
- Student engagement in school
- Positive social skills development

Studies show that there is a significant difference in student achievement between schools with a good school climate and those with a poor school climate.
Recent research has associated a **positive school climate** with healthy brain physiology:

- Executive function
- Cortical thickness and surface area
What Does This Mean?

Students:

Are most likely to meet their potential and develop appropriate social and emotional skills when they feel safe at school, feel welcomed at school, are treated with respect, and are given opportunities to learn, mature and grow.

Schools:

If the school climate is not positive, students will underperform, student attendance and student discipline are not likely to improve, school safety could be compromised, and teacher retention may be negatively affected.
Need to *Measure* What You Want to Improve

- Measuring school climate is critical for *improving* school climate! High quality school climate data allow you to:
  - Understand perceptions of students, staff, and parents
  - Monitor progress
  - Make data-driven decisions
  - Involve stakeholders
  - Adapt to shifting needs related to school climate.

- To facilitate school climate measurement, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) developed a high-quality, adaptable ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) and associated web-based platform.

- The surveys can be downloaded free of charge and provide user-friendly school climate reports back to users.
U.S. Department of Education
Safe Supportive Schools Model

**Domain: Engagement**
- **Topics:**
  - Cultural and linguistic competence
  - Relationships
  - School participation

**Domain: Safety**
- **Topics:**
  - Emotional safety
  - Physical safety
  - Bullying/cyberbullying
  - Substance abuse
  - Emergency readiness/management

**Domain: Environment**
- **Topics:**
  - Physical environment
  - Instructional environment
  - Physical health
  - Mental health
  - Discipline

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
Safe Supportive Learning
Engagement | Safety | Environment
EDSCLS Respondents

- Middle grade (5-8) students
- High school students
- Parents / Guardians
- Teachers
- Non-instructional staff (including principals)
Administering EDSCLS

- Can administer at school, district, or state level.
- Allows for the local storage of data, accessible only to authorized users.
- Multiple surveys (i.e., students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, and parents/guardians) can be open at the same time.
- During data collection, administrators can see how many respondents have finished the survey using the “survey status reports” feature.
- Users are anonymous; no registration with download.
EDSCLS Dashboard

**SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY**

**INFORMED CONSENT**

**LOG OUT**

**EDUCATION AGENCY**
Edit information about your education agency and survey administrator.

**DATA COLLECTION**
Create, edit, and delete data collections.

**RESPONDENT USERNAMES**
Generate, export, and disseminate respondent usernames for data collections that have not closed yet. Exporting usernames, importing respondent e-mail addresses, and disseminating usernames via e-mail are optional features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA COLLECTION</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>GENERATED</th>
<th>EXPORTED</th>
<th>DISSEMINATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/17/2015-02/27/2015: Students</td>
<td>Started</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/17/2015-02/27/2015: Teachers/Instructional Staff</td>
<td>Started</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REPORTS**
Produce real-time survey status reports and survey results reports immediately after each data collection.

**SURVEY RESULTS**
Export and import survey results immediately after each data collection.

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National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
Safe Supportive Learning
Engagement | Safety | Environment
### New Survey Item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Respondent Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults working at this school treat all students respectfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff at this school give students opportunities to get involved in service projects or activities.</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>Non-instructional Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY (SCLS)

English | Español

The School Climate Survey (SCLS) is being administered by SCLS - AIR. Your responses are important to help in understanding the environment of this school and the conditions for teaching and learning.

To start the survey, please enter your username below.

Username: [ ] LOG IN
EDSCLS Reporting

- Includes reporting tool for providing
  - item-level frequencies
  - domain-level scores and topic-level sub-scores.

- Reporting tool can compare scores at the school-, district-, or state-level and by the following demographic characteristics.
  - Student Survey: grade level, race/ethnicity, and gender
  - Instructional Staff Survey: race/ethnicity and gender
  - Non-instructional Staff Survey: race/ethnicity and gender
  - Parent Survey (no demographics for this one)

- Quick turn-around
  - Reports available within 24 hours for data collected through the platform
  - Reports available immediately for data that are imported into the platform.
### Engagement

#### Cultural and Linguistic Competence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All students are treated the same, regardless of whether their parents are</td>
<td>STRONGLY AGREE (4) 33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich or poor.</td>
<td>AGREE (3) 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DISAGREE (2) 21.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STRONGLY DISAGREE (1) 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEAN     2.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bar chart showing the distribution of responses:
- **Strongly Agree**: 33.33%
- **Agree**: 25%
- **Disagree**: 21.67%
- **Strongly Disagree**: 20%
EDSCLS Reporting
THREE BENCHMARK LEVELS

- **Level 3: Most Favorable**
  - *Most favorable* perception of this school climate domain/topic area.
  - The score is more than 400.

- **Level 2: Favorable**
  - *Favorable* perception of this school climate domain/topic area.
  - The score is 300-400.

- **Level 1: Least Favorable**
  - *Least favorable* perception of this school climate domain/topic area.
  - The score is less than 300.
EDSCLS Reporting: BENCHMARKED SCALE SCORES

- **Release of benchmarked scale scores**
  - Benchmarked scale scores available in EDSCLS VM/platform 3.0 and later versions.

- **Calculations for the benchmarked scale scores**
  - Were created using item parameters based on a Rasch model.
  - Based on data from about 100 US schools that administered the EDSCLS and voluntarily shared their data with US Dept. of Education.
  - Data comes from completed student, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff surveys (not parent).

- **Impact of benchmarked scale scores**
  - Users can compare scale scores across domains and topics.
  - Users **can not** compare the scale scores that were produced by earlier versions of the EDSCLS (aka “legacy” scale scores).
EDSCLS – Important Notes

- **Capacity**
  - Works best for 500 or fewer *concurrent* respondents
  - Dual servers can support up to 500 *additional* concurrent respondents

- **Monthly Security Updates**
  - VM/platform is scanned monthly
  - Security patches are applied
  - Updated versions are released and notice is emailed to all known users
  - New version 4.0 in October 2018!
EDSCLS Help Desk

- Help desk staff available from 9 AM – 5 PM Eastern Time
- Submit and receive responses to questions via phone or email
- Help desk staff can address questions about:
  - Downloading and installing the platform
  - Setting up the platform
  - Administering the survey and survey logistics
  - Reporting
- Contact Us at edscls@air.org or (866) 730-6735
- EDSLCS User Guide available online:

School Climate Improvement Resource Package
ED’s National Center for Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) has a suite of resources to help school district and school leaders analyze and understand local school climate survey data, as well as practical advice and information to support the implementation and sustainability of local school climate improvement efforts.
Tour of the SCIRP

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about
NCSSLE maintains compendium of valid, reliable school climate surveys.

Any included survey can be legitimately used, in whole or in part. All have been tested for validity and reliability.
Questions?
Website: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls

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