

School Climate Surveys

Communities That Care Survey

The *Communities That Care Survey (CTC)* is a statewide needs assessment based on the work of Dr. J. David Hawkins and Dr. Richard F. Catalano. It is a tool designed to identify the levels of **risk factors** related to problem behaviors such as alcohol, substance abuse and bullying- and to identify the levels of **protective factors** that help guard against those behaviors. In addition to measuring risk and protective factors, the *CTC* also measures the actual prevalence of drug use, violence and other anti-social behaviors among surveyed students.

The survey is sponsored by the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services/Office of Prevention, in collaboration with the Southeast Kansas Education Service Center (Greenbush). The results of the survey are used to help plan prevention programs statewide.

Some important facts about the survey:

1. It is anonymous. Students will not place their names on the survey questionnaire. No one will be able to connect any individual student with his or her responses. School staff will not see any student's responses.
2. Participation in the survey is voluntary. Students may decline to participate at any time or skip any question they do not wish to answer/
3. Questions cover alcohol, drugs, tobacco, bullying and other anti-social behaviors.
4. The survey is administered to 6, 8, 10 and 12th graders annually in Kansas.
5. Schools administer the survey anytime from December through January. The current survey contains around 130 questions. Questions are divided by domain:
 - a. Demographics and school climate
 - b. Peer influences
 - c. Drug/alcohol usage
 - d. Community based perceptions
 - e. Family domain
6. The document does contain response validity checks to ensure that it measures what it is supposed to.
7. Data is aggregated to five levels:
 - a. State
 - b. County
 - c. District
 - d. Building
 - e. Grade
8. State and County data is published and available at <http://beta.ctcdata.org/>.
9. Approximately 220 districts and 70,000 students participate in the survey each year.

USD 265 Goddard Respect Initiative

USD has developed a safe schools curriculum that they refer to as the “Goddard Respect Initiative.” The Goddard Respect Initiative (GRI) is the end result of a year-long effort by a committee of staff and parents trying to address those concerns.

GRI is based upon the belief that their school patrons and community have high expectations of the Goddard Public Schools. The community believes that they must not only address academics, but they also have an obligation and a commitment to teach and model good citizenship, to respect each other, and to accept personal responsibility for wellness.

Their students, school system and society in general face many issues, such as:

- bullying
- use and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana by our students
- student pregnancies
- physically unfit students
- student expulsions for inappropriate behaviors
- cyber crimes and consequences

The Goddard Board of Education approved the concept of the Goddard Respect Initiative, with a comprehensive curriculum to include all educational levels in the district. The board also adopted a policy specifically addressing bullying issues, and established the focus of the initiative as preventing unhealthy behaviors. A committee of parents, staff and board members moved forward from there and established common terminology to be used by the school district in the implementation and administration of this initiative asking every student, every district employee, and every parent in Goddard School District to share in the responsibility for implementing the initiative.

Components of the GRI include:

- Program developmental phases and implementation timeline
- BOE policy
- District wide common vocabulary
- District wide GRI posters and information cards
- Counselors, administrators and other staff training
- Teaching and implementation of the initiative at the elementary, intermediate, middle and high school levels
- Explanation and implementation of the initiative at all school district departments
- Lessons planned and mapped for delivery consistency
- Student, parent and staff yearly survey (on-line option)
- Common reporting forms for consistency of administration

CDW-G School Safety Survey

CDW Government, Inc. worked with Quality Education data to conduct a survey of K-12 public schools information directors and security directors to;

- Evaluate districts' cyber and physical security
- Assess current cyber and physical measures
- Understand the impact of cyber and physical security education and communication
- Understand the proliferation of security breaches

School Safety Index (see attachment)

The Safety Index represents the elements of an overall security program, it sets a national benchmark to gauge the current status of school safety and outlines steps for improvement. Additionally, the index aims to focus attention on the convergence of IT and physical security in public school districts.

Assessment for School Climate (ASC)

<http://www.6seconds.org/school/case.php>

The Assessment of School Climate (ASC) is a statistically reliable research process designed to examine the climate of a school/district and identify areas both supporting and interfering with academic and emotional growth. The school/district climate (or connectedness) influences critical constituent behaviors such as communication, problem solving, and accountability - factors that affect students/parents/employees change and adherence to the mission.

The survey addresses four aspects of the school climate:

Empathy: How accurately do people listen to one another? Can people perceive the pain/joy others are experiencing? If so, is either an appropriate verbal or action response given to demonstrate empathetic understanding? How well do people pay attention to the message delivered through body language?

Accountability: To what extent do people in the organization see themselves and others following through on commitments? Are they motivated and do they take responsibility? Do they consider the consequences of the decisions made? Do they recognize their ability to influence and/or control? Do they accept ownership for actions/decisions in which they participated? Do they demonstrate endurance? Can they be cheerleaders for themselves?

Respect: Do people appreciate the value of each individual? Do people acknowledge the contributions of individuals? Do people esteem differences? Do people solicit others' opinions/expertise? Is respect observed at all levels? Are personal/professional boundaries recognized/respected?

Trust: Do people have a sense of faith and belief in the organization and its leaders? Do individuals squander time watching their backs - instead of doing their best? Do people have assurance that others will follow through on agreements? Are people willing to delegate various responsibilities? Is there demonstrable integrity? Are there specific principles created/followed by all? (The Trust factor is composed of questions selected from the other three areas.)

The ASC can effectively be used to create buy-in for re-examination of mission/goals/objectives, for refinement of purpose, for changes/growth, plus the opportunity to focus on developmental efforts/benchmarks and to measure improvements. The survey quickly provides a snapshot of perceptions, presented in a series of graphs such as the one below. In the ASC report a narrative description explains each graph and provides considerations for action.

Depending on whether the survey is on an individual, elementary school, high school, or district level, a variety of different divisions/subdivisions can be examined. Subgroups can be created based first on faculty/students, and parents. In addition, subgroups such as departments, geographic locations, and/or administrative or support levels can be compared to identify areas of agreement or disagreement. Additional reports on specific groups help target development and management efforts to move away from “one size fits all” intervention. Critical questions are identified to pinpoint specific strengths and concerns.

The confidential assessment is completed online by all or selected employees. The survey takes 10-20 minutes to complete. The whole process, from announcement to results, can be completed in less than two weeks.

There are 23 items on the assessment, such as:

- **Accountability:** "If a student misbehaves, a teacher takes action," and "People here follow the rules about behavior."
- **Empathy:** "Teachers here care about me," and, "People feel important to the school."
- **Respect:** "People here say one thing but do another," and, "People here don't gossip much."

Additional questions can instantly be added to the survey to check the effects of the school's ongoing initiatives or to measure a specific area of concern (e.g., how people feel about the math program). The measure is designed for frequent use to keep a “finger on the pulse” of the organization. The ASC is rapid, low-cost, and effective. It can also be used as a supplement to state testing requirements.

ASC was developed by Six Seconds' team of emotional intelligence (EQ) experts led by Anabel Jensen, Ph.D. and Joshua Freedman. Drawing on the authors' extensive backgrounds in EQ, the tool examines areas where emotionally intelligent and emotionally unintelligent behavior often affects performance and school culture.

Evaluation of School Climate Assessment Instruments

For an evaluation of on-line surveys go to:

<http://www.emc.cmich.edu/CharacterEd/instruments.htm> or

<http://www.emc.cmich.edu/CharacterEd/assessments.htm> .

Western Alliance for the Study of School Climate

The Western Alliance for the Study of School Climate (WASSC) is a consortium of researchers hosted at California State University in Los Angeles focused on school improvement.

WASSC has defined a healthy school climate as one that includes:

- effective teaching
- quality leadership
- motivated staff and students
- a sense of community
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It has developed a tool of measuring school climate based on what they refer to as the Path to Healthy Climate. Components of this instrument include:

- assessment of current climate;
- forming a team to lead the staff driven, democratic inquiry;
- developing a school wide vision;
- enlisting support and resources to assist schools in achieving their vision

The link to WASSC can be found at:

<http://www.calstatela.edu/centers/schoolclimate/assessment.html>.

The Positive School Climate Tool Kit (Minneapolis Public Schools)

"Creating a Positive School Climate for Learning" is a tool kit for building leaders, teachers and staff of Minneapolis Public Schools. It is based on the premise that students will learn more and achieve at higher levels when:

- Data drives decision-making
- Students are engaged
- School buildings are safe
- Staff and students are culturally competent
- Families and the community are involved
- School systems support instruction

Components/chapters of the toolkit include:

- Introduction
- Using data to assess school climate
- Behavior
- Attendance
- Health
- Safety
- Cultural Competence and equity
- Family and Community Involvement
- Operational Systems

Here is the link to their web site:

http://sss.mpls.k12.mn.us/Positive_School_Climate_Tool_Kit.html

Wisconsin Successful School Guide

This electronic resource has been created to help educators, parents and community members who have an interest in educating the hearts and minds of all children. The Standards and Assessment, Data Analysis, Continuous School Improvement and Best Practices sections guide users to key local, state and national information about success in education as found on the [DPI Web site](#) and other valuable resources.

Of particular note is the page dedicated to school and classroom surveys.

<http://dpi.state.wi.us/sig/improvement/process.html>