
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

Results of ED School Climate Surveys
2018-19 School Year

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents results of the ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS), a suite of survey instruments developed for schools, districts, and states by the U.S. Department of Education. The EDSCLS is comprised of surveys for students (grades 5-12), staff (instructional and non-instructional), and parents. The EDSCLS allows the school district to collect and act on reliable, nationally validated school climate data in real-time.

In 2018-19, the response rates were 70%, 46%, and 12% for students, staff, and parents, respectively (national response rates were 65%, 44%, and 4%). The percent of respondents that gave their school an A or B was 69.9%, 77.9%, and 79.2% for students, staff, and parents, respectively. Positive rates were greater than 75% for every domain and respondent group, indicating significantly more agreement to positive statements like “I feel like I belong” (students) or “Staff at this school care about what families think” (parents).

What is Being Measured:

The School Climate surveys are comprised of 70, 82, and 47 items for students, staff, and parents, respectively. Completion time is approximately 10 to 20 minutes. The first set of items are demographics such as gender and race/ethnicity, as well as an item asking parents and students to grade to their school. The second set, the school climate items, have 4 response options: two negative, two positive, and no middle/neutral category. Some items included an “I don’t know” option (respondents could also skip any item). The EDSCLS provides measures in three domains, as well as 13 topics within the domains:

- **Engagement** – Cultural and Linguistic Competence, Relationships, and School Participation
- **Safety** – Emotional Safety, Physical Safety, Bullying/Cyberbullying, Substance Abuse, and Emergency Readiness/Management
- **Environment** – Physical Environment, Instructional Environment, Physical Health, Mental Health, and Discipline

The complete set of items can be found at the web address:

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls/administration/>

The U.S. Department of Education developed benchmarked scale scores on the domains and topics. There are four perception levels aligned with the four response options (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):

- Very Positive (scale scores above 400)
- Positive (scale scores between 300 and 400)
- Negative (scale scores from 200 to below 300)
- Very Negative (scale scores below 200)

Results are provided by the percentage of Very Positive/Positive.

What the Results Show:

- A total of 5,328 surveys were completed by students.
- A total of 1,561 surveys were completed by parents.
- A total of 681 surveys were completed by staff.
- Parents gave schools a grade point average of 3.12 (vs 3.18 in 2018).
- Students gave schools a grade point average of 2.83 (vs 2.81 in 2018).
- 69.9% of students assigned their school with an A or a B.
- 79.2% of parents assigned their students' schools with an A or a B.
- Overall, all groups tended to agree with positive statements about the school

BACKGROUND

The school district's strategic plan core values include respect for the diversity and dignity of all, as well as striving to provide a safe learning environment through strategic goals such as effective communication and parental engagement. The EDSCLS aligns well with the district's strategic plan and can be used to evaluate efforts. The EDSCLS builds on federal initiatives and research, which recommended that the U.S. Department of Education work on the issue of school climate. High quality school climate data allows the district to understand the perceptions of the students, staff, and parents that cannot be measured through quantitative outcomes such as graduation rates or test performance. The EDSCLS is a suite of surveys for students, parents, and staff to provide reliable and nationally validated school climate data on Safety, Engagement, and Environment for schools.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

In February and March 2019, the school district implemented the EDSCLS. Four surveys were administered – for students in grades 5-12, parents of PK-12 students, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff. Parents and staff received communications with links to the EDSCLS in survey monkey (e-mail, district website, etc). The surveys were anonymous for parents and both groups of staff. The survey did not ask parents or staff to identify themselves, thus encouraging them to answer the questions honestly. Students were given access through their student portal in Powerschool Premier (the school district's student information system). Student surveys were confidential to protect student privacy, but to also complete grant reporting.

RESPONSE RATES

As shown in Table 1, response rates were 70%, 46%, and 12% for students, staff and parents, respectively (with varying response rates by school group). The number of children attending the school was included in each parent survey. Thus, parent response rates are calculated by dividing the total number of students represented in the completed surveys by the number of K-12 students enrolled. This calculation assumes only one survey was completed per student by a parent/guardian.

Table 1: 2018-19 Response Rates for Students, Staff, and Parents by School Group

School	Students			Staff			Parents		
	# Surveys	# Possible	Response Rate	# Surveys	# Possible	Response Rate	# Surveys*	# Possible**	Response Rate
Elementary	1,754	2,191	80%	391	911	43%	1,045	7,710	14%
Secondary	3,574	5,456	66%	285	574	50%	516	5,630	9%
Total	5,328	7,647	70%	681	1485	46%	1,594	13,340	12%

*Some parents filled out one survey, but indicated they have more than one child attending the school

** Number of possible parent surveys is based on the PK-12 enrollment

SECTION I: RESULTS FOR STUDENTS

5,328 students in grades 5-12 completed the school climate survey in Spring 2019. Figure 1 and Table 2 provide the distribution of grades. Comprehensive School Climate results for students are available at the tableau public dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/profile/k12northstar#!/>

This report provides summary results for the district. Individual school results and/or combinations of demographics can be accessed through the public dashboard. Filters include School Name, School Group (Elementary, Middle, or High), Grade Level, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Migrant, Homeless, English Language Learner, Economic Disadvantage, Disability Status, and Military Dependent. Some information may be suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Figure 1: School Grade Distribution: Students

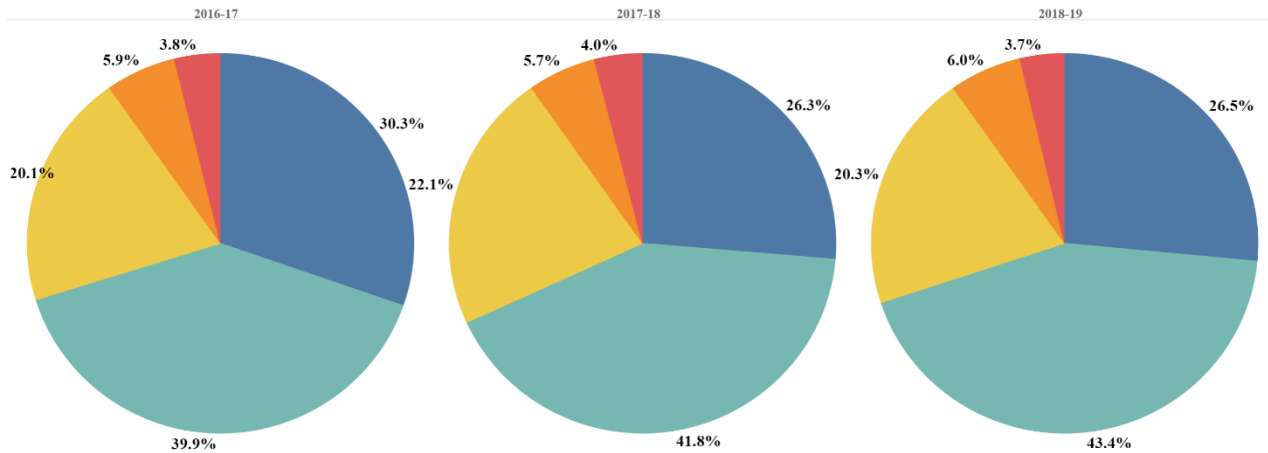


Table 2: School Grade Distribution by School Type (2017 to 2019): Students

YEAR	A	B	C	D	F
Elementary Schools	36%	40%	16%	5%	3%
Secondary Schools	23%	43%	23%	7%	4%
All Schools	27%	42%	21%	6%	4%

Graph 1: Positive Rates 2017 to 2019: Students

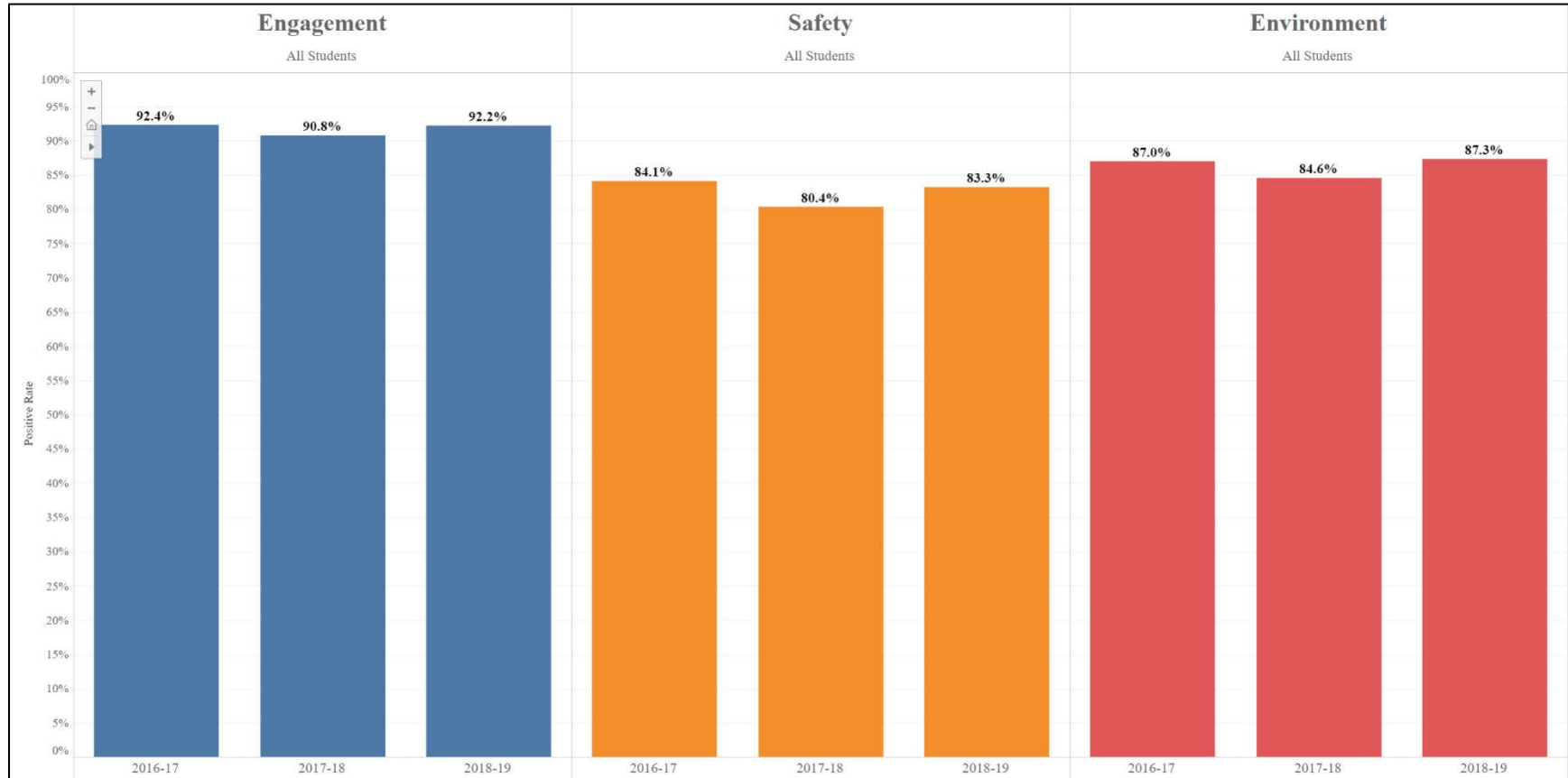


Table 3: Positive Rates by School Type (2017 to 2019): Students

SCHOOL TYPE	ENGAGEMENT	SAFETY	ENVIRONMENT
Elementary Schools	96%	92%	92%
Secondary Schools	90%	78%	83%
All Schools	92%	83%	86%

Engagement

The domain of Engagement includes 3 topics: Cultural and linguistic competence (CLC), Relationships (REL), and School Participation (PAR). Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

- CLC – “People of different cultural backgrounds, races, or ethnicities get along well at this school.”
- REL – “Teachers are available when I need to talk with them.”
- PAR – “I regularly attend school-sponsored events, such as school dances, sporting events, student performances, or other school activities.”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree

Graph 2: Positive Rates for Engagement Topics (2017 to 2019): Students

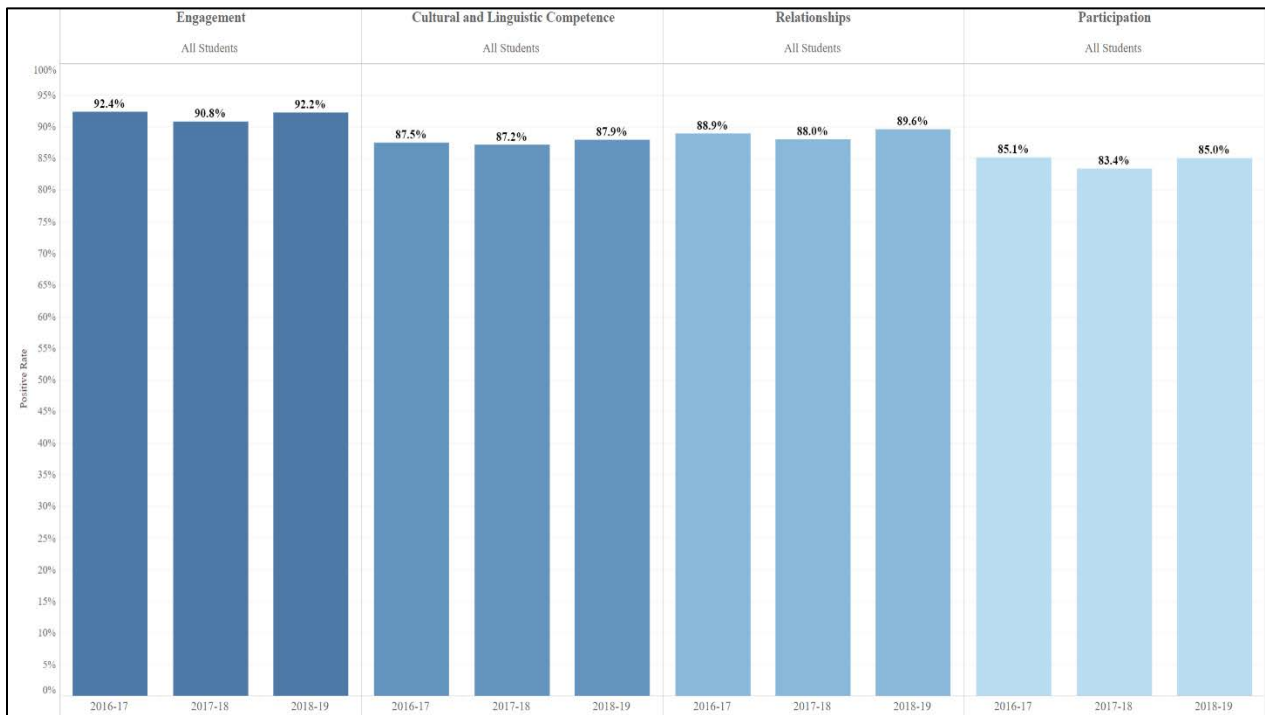


Table 4: Positive Rates for Engagement Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Students

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
ENGAGEMENT	96%	90%	92%
Curriculum and Linguistic Competence	93%	85%	88%
Relationships	94%	87%	89%
School Participation	88%	83%	85%

SAFETY

The domain of Safety includes five topics: Emotional Safety (EMO), Physical Safety (PSAF), Bullying/Cyberbullying (BUL), Substance Abuse (SUB), and Emergency Readiness/Management (ERM). Note that scale scores are not produced for ERM. Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

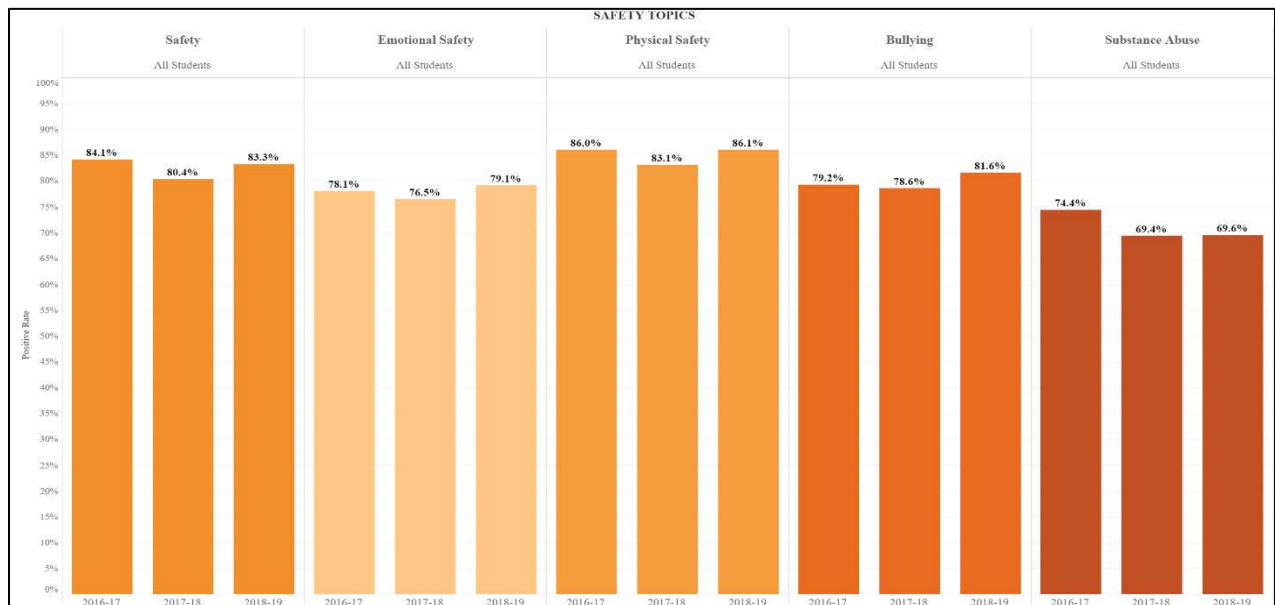
- EMO – “I feel socially accepted.”
- PSAF – “I feel safe going to and from this school.”
- BUL – “Students at this school are often bullied.”
- SUB – “Students use/try alcohol or drugs while at school or school-sponsored events.”
- ERM – “If students hear about a threat to school or student safety, they would report it to someone in authority”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree

Table 5: Positive Rates for Safety Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Students

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
SAFETY	92%	78%	83%
Emotional Safety	85%	75%	78%
Physical Safety	90%	83%	85%
Bullying/Cyberbullying	85%	78%	80%
Substance Abuse	95%	59%	71%

Graph 3: Positive Rates for Safety Topics (2017 to 2019): Students



ENVIRONMENT

The domain of Environment includes five topics: Physical Environment (PENV), Instructional Environment (INS), Mental Health (MENH), and Discipline (DIS). Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

- PENV – “I think that students are proud of how this school looks on the outside.”
- INS – “The things I’m learning in school are important to me.”
- MENH – “I can talk to a teacher or other adult at this school about something that is bothering me.”
- DIS – “Adults working at this school reward students for positive behavior.”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree

Graph 4: Positive Rates for Environment Topics (2017 to 2019): Students

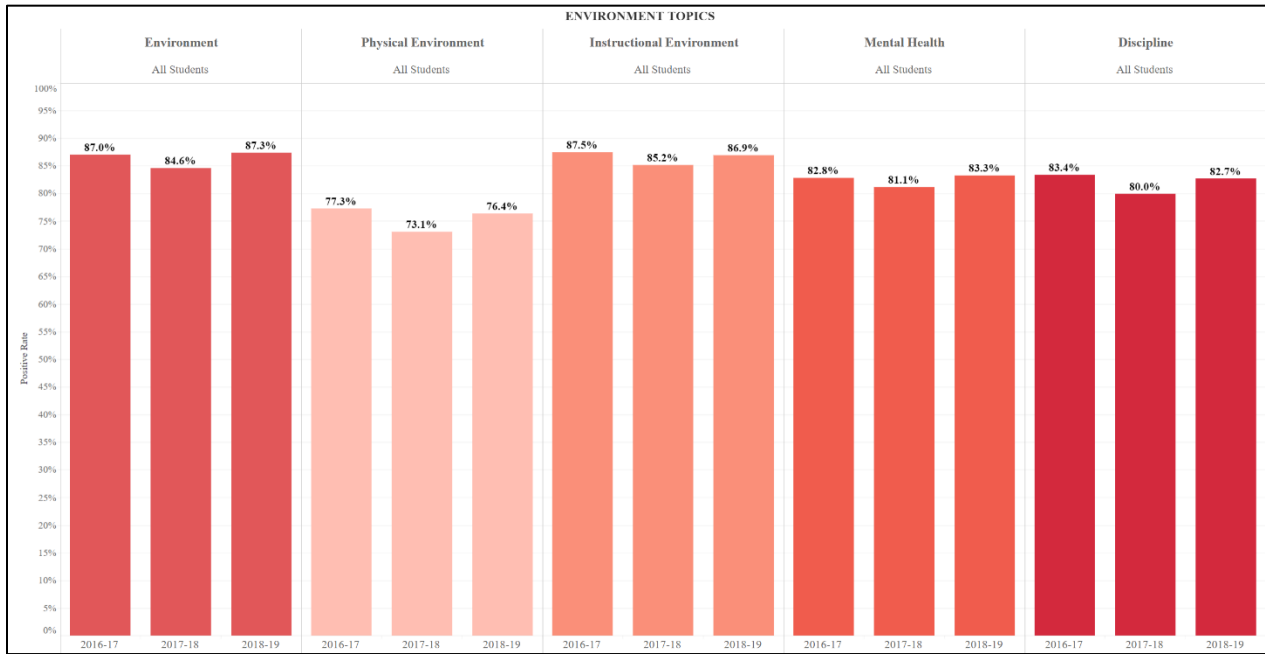


Table 6: Positive Rates for Environment Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Students

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
ENVIRONMENT	92%	83%	86%
Physical Environment	82%	73%	76%
Instructional Environment	93%	84%	87%
Mental Health	89%	80%	82%
Discipline	91%	78%	82%

SECTION II: RESULTS FOR PARENTS

Parents completed school climate surveys to represent 1,594 students in Spring 2019. Figure 2 and Table 7 provide the distribution of grades given to schools. The grade point average in 2019 was 3.12, as compared to 3.19 in 2017. Scale scores were not produced for parents due to low response rates at the nation level (average of 4% - see <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls/measures> for the EDSCLS Pilot Test 2015 Report). Figures 3-5 provide item level results. Comprehensive School Climate results for students are available at the tableau public dashboard: <https://public.tableau.com/profile/k12northstar#!>

Filters include School Name, School Group (Elementary, Middle, or High), Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Military Dependent (answer to question: ‘Does the student have a parent or guardian in the United States Military - Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Guard and Reserve?’). Some information may be suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Figure 2: School Grade Distribution: Parents

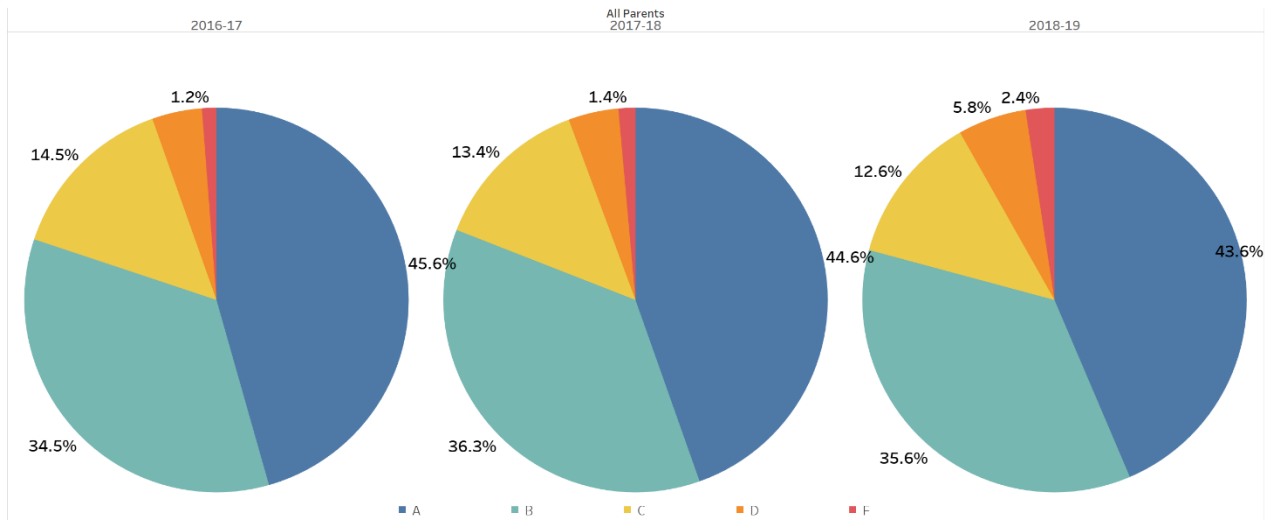


Table 7: School Grade Distribution by School Type (both 2017 and 2018): Parents

SCHOOL TYPE	A	B	C	D	F
Elementary Schools	52%	32%	11%	4%	1%
Secondary Schools	33%	42%	18%	5%	2%
All Schools	45%	36%	13%	4%	2%



Figure 3- Engagement-Questions Agreement Distribution: Parents



Figure 4-Safety Questions Agreement Distribution: Parents

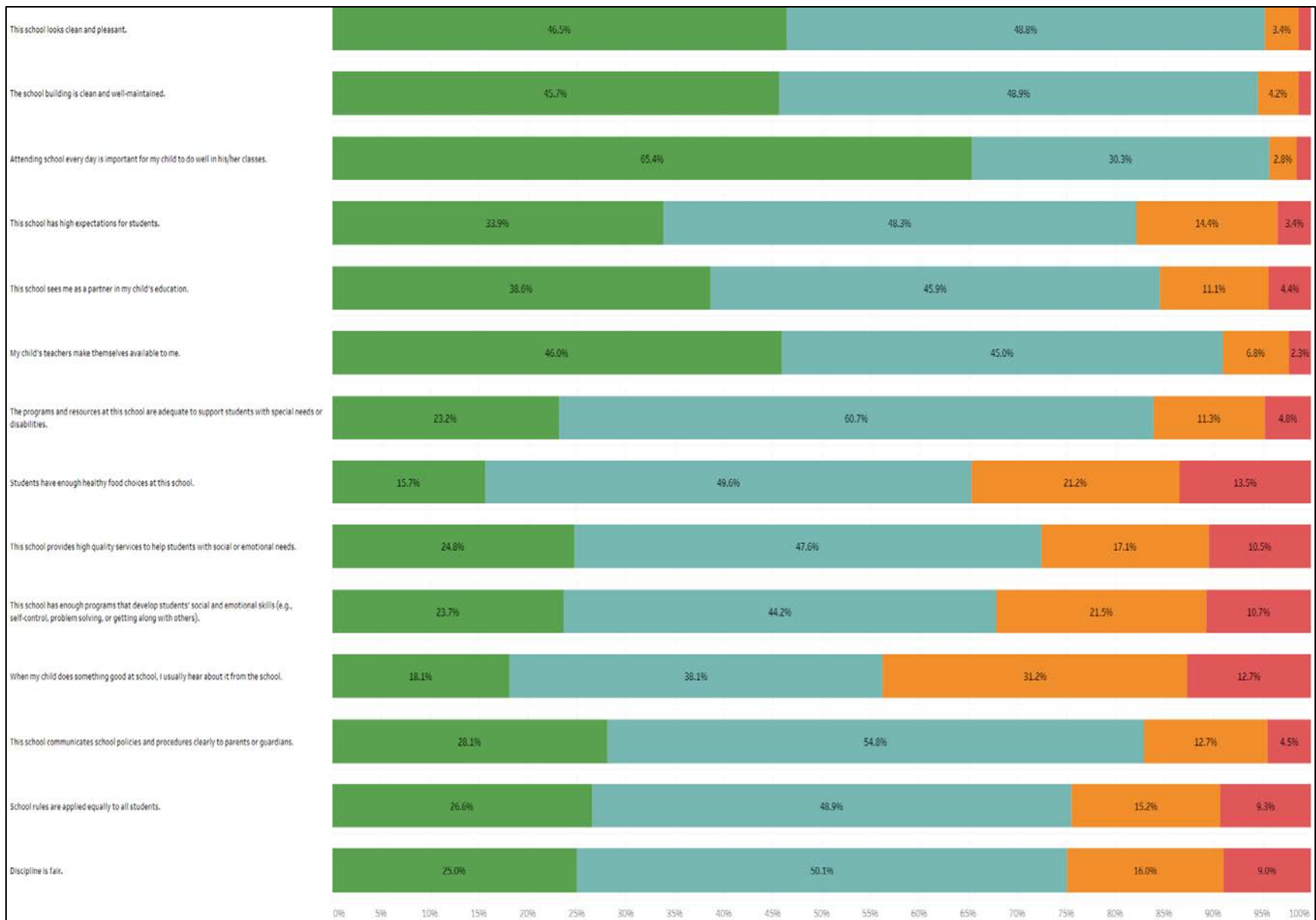


Figure 5-Environment Questions Agreement Distribution: Parents

SECTION III: RESULTS FOR STAFF

681 staff completed the school climate survey in Spring 2019. Comprehensive School Climate results for staff are available at the tableau public dashboard:

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/k12northstar#!>

This report provides summary results for the district. Results for individual schools and/or combinations of demographics can be accessed through the data dashboard. Filters include School Name, School Group (Elementary, Middle, or High), Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Alternate Assignment (English Language Learner, Special Education, Extended Learning Program, Migrant), and Years of Experience. Some information may be suppressed to protect confidentiality.

Graph 5 and Table 8 provide the positive rates on the domains of Engagement, Safety, and Environment

Graph 5-Positive Rates 2017 to 2019: Staff

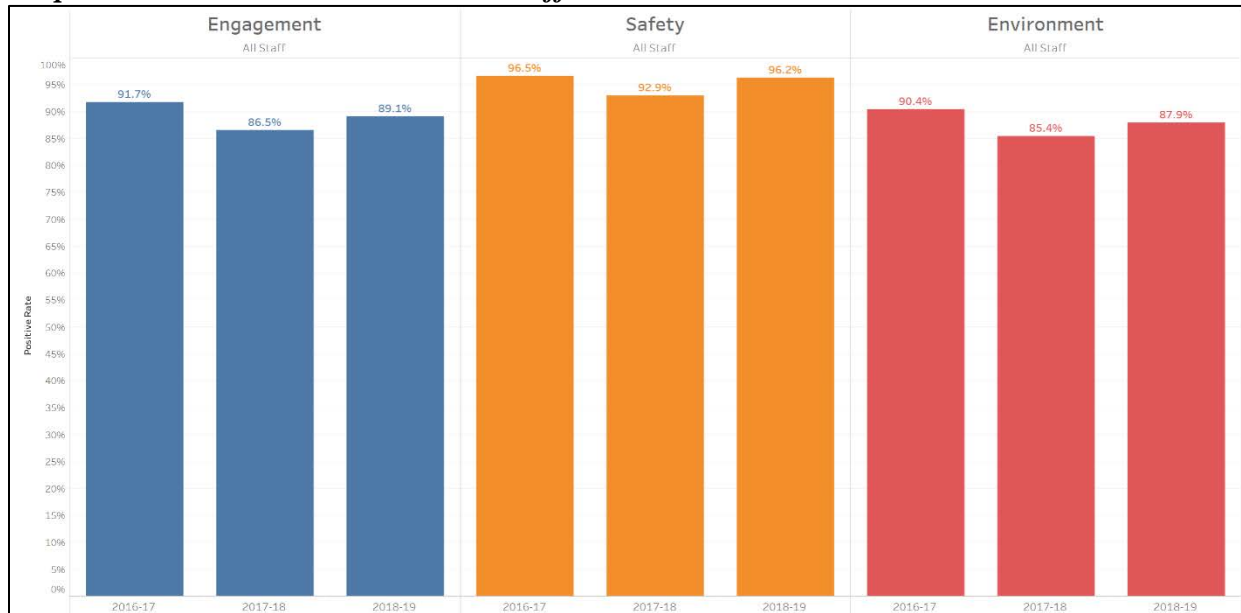


Table 8: Positive Rates by School Type (2017 to 2019): Staff

SCHOOL TYPE	ENGAGEMENT	SAFETY	ENVIRONMENT
Elementary Schools	91%	98%	92%
Secondary Schools	87%	92%	84%
All Schools	89%	95%	88%

Engagement

The domain of Engagement includes 3 topics: Cultural and linguistic competence (CLC), Relationships (REL), and School Participation (PAR). Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

- CLC – “This school emphasizes showing respect for all students’ cultural beliefs and practices.”
- REL – “Staff do a good job helping parents to support their children’s learning at home.”
- PAR – “Administrators involve staff in decision-making.”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree

Graph 6-Positive Rates for Engagement Topics (2017 to 2019): Staff

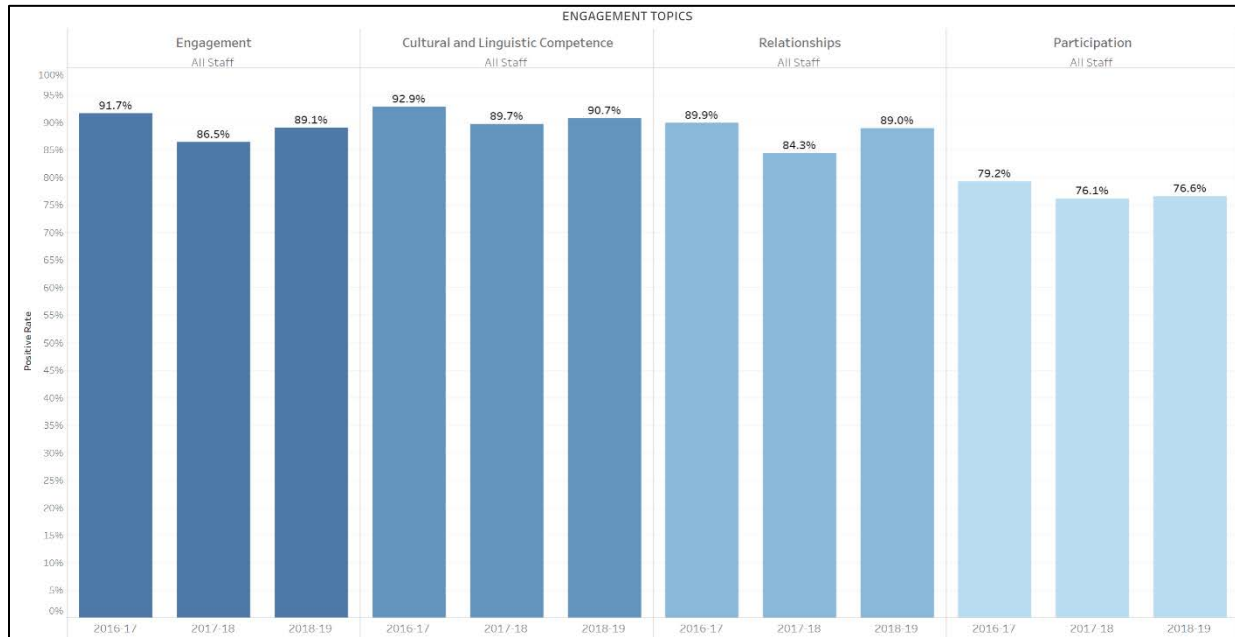


Table 9: Positive Rates for Engagement Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Staff

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
ENGAGEMENT	91%	87%	89%
Curriculum and Linguistic Competence	94%	88%	91%
Relationships	91%	84%	88%
School Participation	78%	77%	77%

SAFETY

The domain of Safety includes five topics: Emotional Safety (EMO), Physical Safety (PSAF), Bullying/Cyberbullying (BUL), Substance Abuse (SUB), and Emergency Readiness/Management (ERM). Note that scale scores are not produced for ERM. Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

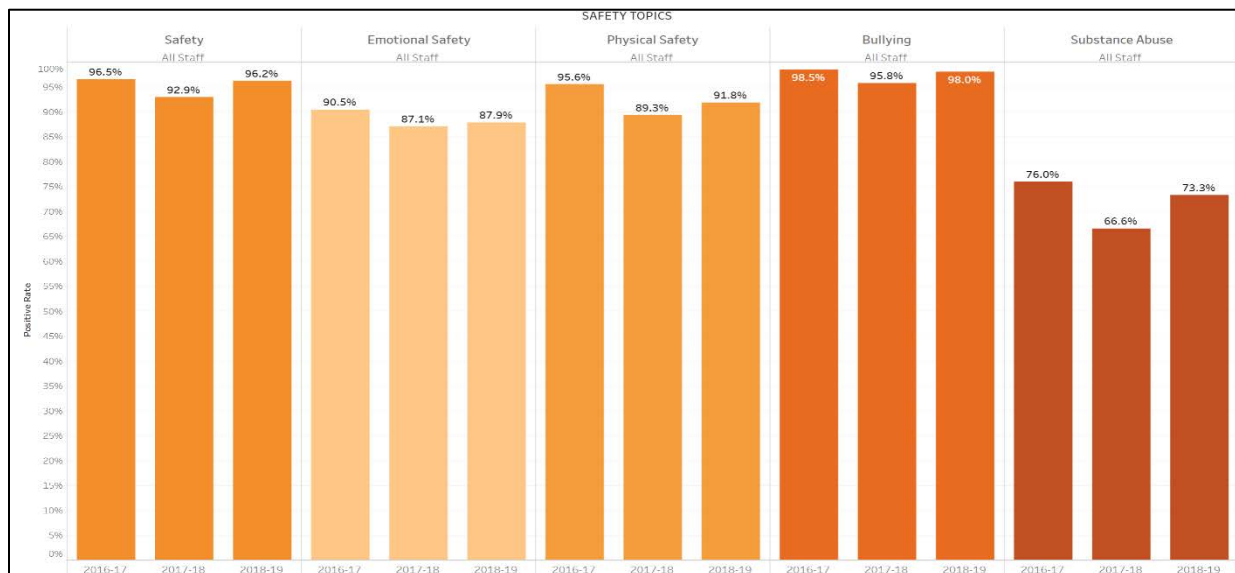
- EMO – “I feel satisfied with the recognition I get for doing a good job.”
- PSAF – “The following types of problems occur at this school often: physical conflict among students.”
- BUL – “Staff at this school always stop bullying when they see it.”
- SUB – “This school has adequate resources to address substance use prevention.”
- ERM – “This school or school district provides effective training in safety procedures to staff (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills).”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree (some statements are negative and the desirable response would be disagreement)

Table 10-Positive Rates for Safety Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Staff

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
SAFETY	98%	92%	95%
Emotional Safety	91%	86%	88%
Physical Safety	95%	89%	92%
Bullying/Cyberbullying	99%	95%	97%
Substance Abuse	75%	69%	72%

Graph 7: Positive Rates for Safety Topics (2017 to 2019): Staff



ENVIRONMENT

The domain of Environment includes five topics: Physical Environment (PENV), Instructional Environment (INS), Physical Health (PHEA), Mental Health (MENH), and Discipline (DIS). Examples of questions for each topic area are included below:

- PENV – “This school looks clean and pleasant.”
- INS – “Teachers at this school feel responsible to help each other do their best.”
- PHEA – “This school places a priority on making healthy food choices.”
- MENH – “This school provides quality counseling or other services to help students with social or emotional needs.”
- DIS – “School rules are applied equally to all students.”

Response options are Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree

Graph 8-Positive Rates for Environment Topics (2017 to 2019): Staff

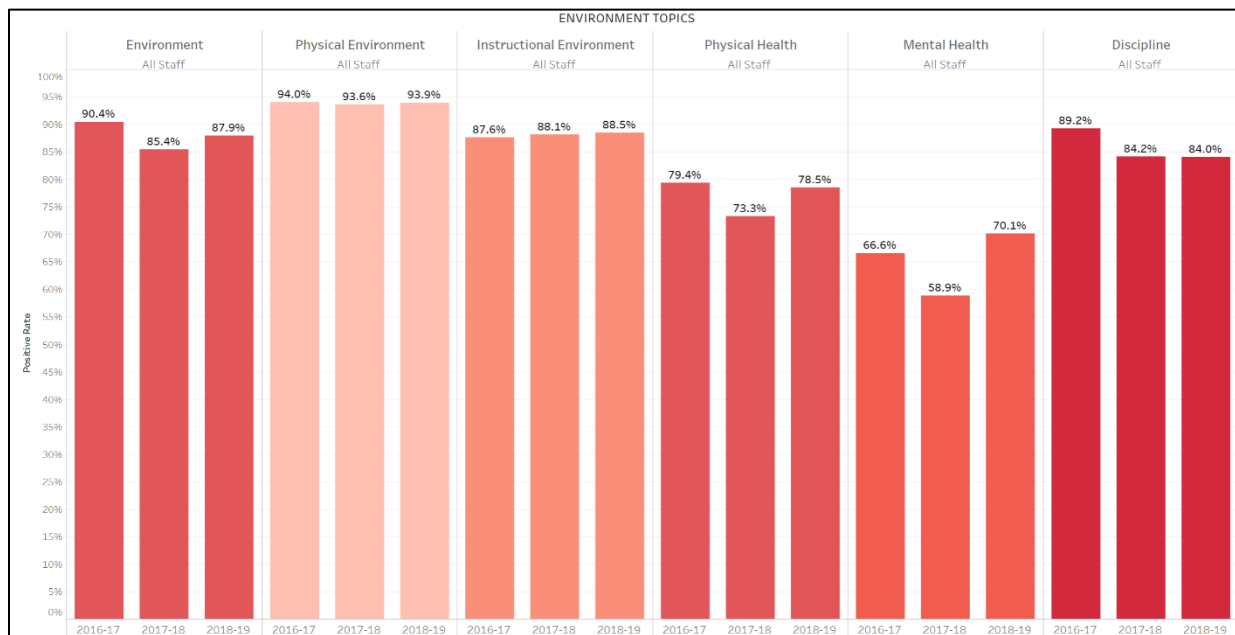


Table 11: Positive Rates for Environment Topics by School Type (2017 to 2019): Staff

	ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	ALL SCHOOLS
ENVIRONMENT	92%	84%	88%
Physical Environment	96%	92%	94%
Instructional Environment	91%	86%	88%
Physical Health	84%	70%	77%
Mental Health	68%	62%	65%
Discipline	89%	81%	86%

LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations to the extent to which the district can make broad statements regarding these results. Parents, Students, and Staff that respond to the survey are not responding at random. As such, the sample of respondents for the survey may be different than the entire population for each group. The respondents may favor (or not favor) a school more than non-respondents. This phenomenon is referred to as sampling bias.

For students, a bias analysis yielded little difference in response rates by gender and race/ethnicity providing evidence for the sample being representative of the population (student respondents represent the whole group) for the district – school sampling bias could be higher if response rates differ dramatically by demographics within a school.

For parents, since the surveys were anonymous, analysis of the difference between respondents and non-respondents is limited. Amongst parents, 77% of survey respondents were female, 19% were male, and 4% did not respond. By race/ethnicity, the percent of parents were 79%, 5%, 5%, 5%, 9%, 9%, and 8% for Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, AK Native/American Indian, Multi-Ethnic, and no response respectively.

Unfortunately, the demographic information for the entire parent/guardian group is unavailable.

For staff, a bias analysis would also be limited to a few demographics included in the survey (and also available in district data). The distributions of gender and race/ethnicity were similar between the survey respondent group and all district staff.

CONCLUSION

The EDSCLS provides a formalized process for district staff to collect and analyze student, staff, and parent perceptions of schools. The survey collects important information in education that is too frequently left out of accountability for schools. The school climate data provides results that are not adequately represented in performance data such as graduation rates, dropout rates, or average test performance. Schools with typically lower performance data can show strong school climate data. Students, staff, and parents can indicate strong engagement, exceptional safety, and an accepting learning environment regardless of prior test performance. Do adults treat all students respectfully – Are there problems of physical or verbal abuse of teachers from students? Do teachers understand student problems? Do students like one another? Do students, parents, and staff have lots of chances to help decide things for their

school? Do students, parents, and staff feel welcome at the school? These are just a few of the concepts addressed in the survey and are summarized in the domains of Engagement, Safety, and Environment as well as the topics referenced in this report. School Climate results were generally positive, where students, parents, and staff tended to agree to positive statements about their school and disagree with negative statements.

School Climate results provide school leadership teams with the opportunity to study and address domains with lower performance for their school and/or by demographics such as gender or race/ethnicity. School administrators were provided with the web link to the dashboard providing aggregate results as well as several filtering options.

1. How did the district perform in 2019?

Students, staff, and parents tended to agree with positive statements about their school. Greater than $\frac{3}{4}$ of students and staff indicated a positive/very positive school climate in Engagement, Safety, and Environment. Schools were assigned average grades of 2.83, 3.06, and 3.12 from students, staff, and parents, respectively.

2. How did the district perform over time?

There was some increase in the positive rates of Engagement, Safety, and Environment between 2017-18 and 2018-19. The largest increase was 2.9 percentage points in the domain of Safety for students (80.4% in 2017-18 and 83.3% in 2018-19).

3. How does the district perform relative to the nation?

The American Institute of Research (AIR) stated that scale score averages tended to be around 300 for each domain: Engagement, Safety, and Environment. As such, all groups showed above average scale scores for all 3 domains.

4. How does the district perform relative to perception gaps?

Student perception gaps by race/ethnicity, gender, economic status, disability, English learner, and military dependent are evaluated across the domains (using average scale scores). Table 12 provides the results where statistically significant gaps are in bold. Although a gap can be considered statistically significant, especially with large samples, practical differences may be small. Therefore, effect sizes are calculated which range from very small, small, medium, large, very large, to huge. All perception gaps were ‘very small’ or ‘small’. Small effect sizes are underlined in table 12.

Table 12: Average Scale Scores by Demographics for students (2017 to 2019)

	ENGAGEMENT	SAFETY	ENVIRONMENT
Female	351	360	347
Male	349	363	345
Caucasian*	349	360	344
Non-Caucasian*	353	367	353
African-American*	343	351	344
Non-African-American*	350	363	346
Hispanic	349	358	347
Non-Hispanic	350	362	345
Asian/Pacific Islander*	354	363	352
Non-Asian/Pacific Islander*	349	361	345
AK Native/American Indian*	351	369	351
Non-AK Native/American Indian*	350	360	344
Multi-Ethnic	347	358	346
Non-Multi-Ethnic	351	362	345
Economically Disadvantaged	349	361	348
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	350	362	345
Students with Disabilities	353	368	353
Students without Disabilities	349	361	345
English Language Learner	359	374	361
Non-English Language Learner	<u>349</u>	361	345
Military Dependent	352	366	349
Non-Military Dependent	349	361	345

In summary, the district consistently performed well with the EDSCLS. The majority of parents and students indicated a positive/very positive school climate in all 3 domains. For parents, the amount of sampling bias (if non-zero) is unclear since demographics for the parent population is not known. Staff and student sampling bias was reviewed and showed reasonable demographic similarity between survey respondents and the populations. For students, many perception gaps were statistically significant, but all but one were 'very small' in effect size. The average grades for schools was 2.83, 3.06, and 3.12 from students, staff, and parents. Results were generally positive in 2018-19 and positive rates were higher than 2017-18 in each domain.