



About Alaska's 2025 School Climate and Connectedness Survey

What is the School Climate & Connectedness Survey (SCCS)?

The School Climate and Connectedness Survey (SCCS) is a voluntary survey offered to Alaskan school districts since 2006. It was developed by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) in partnership with the Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB).

What does the survey measure?

SCCS measures student, staff, and family member perceptions of their school's climate, and how connected students feel to adults and their peers. There are two student surveys (grades 3-5 and grades 6-12), one staff survey, and one family survey available to school districts.

How do you define school climate?

School climate refers to the quality and character of school life and involves many aspects of the student's educational experience. A positive school climate is the product of a school's attention to fostering safety; promoting a supportive academic, disciplinary, and physical environment; and encouraging and maintaining respectful, trusting, and caring relationships throughout the school community. A positive school climate is critically related to school success. For example, it can improve attendance, achievement, and retention and even rates of graduation, according to research. (From the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments).

How do you define connectedness?

School connectedness refers to students' school experiences and their perceptions and feelings about school. This includes feeling that they are a part of the school, that adults at the school care about them personally, that their learning matters and is a high priority, that they are close to people at school and have supportive relationships with adults, and that teachers and staff consistently treat them with respect.

When is the survey administered?

In 2025, districts selected one of two four-week windows from January 27 - March 21.

Who took the survey?

In 2025, 37,526 students; 6,261 staff; and 12,642 families from 31 districts took the survey.

How is the survey administered?

Student and staff surveys are taken online during the school day. The family survey is shared out by each district and/or school site using their own family communication tools (newsletters, website, media, etc). Each school receives unique survey links.

Does the survey require parental/guardian consent?

No, this survey does not require active parental consent according to Alaska state statute 14.03.110 (2024). However, we recommend that districts inform parents/guardians about the survey, and allow them to review a sample of the student survey. Parents/Guardians can elect to opt their child(ren) out.

How were survey questions developed?

To ensure a high standard of quality and validity, this survey was developed in close partnership with American Institutes for Research (AIR), a leader in rigorous data collection and survey methodology. We prioritized scientific integrity by incorporating questions from established, validated instruments like the US Department of Education School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) and the Panorama Education School Climate surveys. Where necessary, wording adjustments were made to ensure the questions resonate accurately with the unique experiences of Alaska's schools and communities. We also gather input from participating districts, schools, and families to understand question interpretation and relevance. Survey topics were selected that (a) reflect the best knowledge in the field about what matters for school climate and connectedness, (b) are of importance to school districts in Alaska, and (c) are not already being assessed by the state in some other way. In addition, prior to launching the SCCS, students from a variety of backgrounds took part in one-on-one "think aloud" review of the questions to help ensure that students were understanding the questions in line with their intended meaning, and would be able to formulate a thoughtful answer.

How reliable are the SCCS topics?

Within the SCCS items and scales, survey items have undergone rigorous psychometric review to ensure that the items work well individually and in scales. At the scale level, both exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis and reliability metrics confirm that when items have been put together to form a scale, those items "hang together" and seem to all be measuring the same idea overall. SCCS topics have gone through Cronbach's alpha measure for reliability (internal consistency) by the American Institutes for Research.

Did we exclude any responses? If so, why?

Yes, all survey results have gone through a data-cleaning process, which led to some survey responses being excluded. In even well-designed and administered surveys, a small minority of respondents do not provide useful data. Instead, they rush through the survey without reading or answering questions. This is called survey "satisficing." It is an unavoidable part of any survey data collection, and data "cleaning" more generally is a best practice of nearly all analytic efforts.

How did we eliminate respondents?

We used survey completion time (how long it took each respondent to complete the survey) and rate (what proportion of questions they answered) to identify satisficers. More specifically, respondents who did not answer a majority of questions were excluded from analysis. We also excluded staff who took less than 4 seconds per completed question, older students (grades 6-12) who took less than 4 seconds per completed question, and younger students (grades 3-5) who took less than 5 seconds per completed question. We arrived at these cutoffs by examining the distribution of these variables, the statistical relationship among variables, and their relationship to survey straight-lining (responding with

the same answer many times in a row). We were much better at identifying straight-lining younger students, for example, by using a time cutoff of 4 seconds per item versus 5 seconds per item.

How many responses were excluded?

We examined exclusion rates and while there were unique instances of schools with 10% or more of responses rejected, this was not widespread. Overall, the percentage of responses rejected across the survey program were consistent with years past and are the following:

Students, Grades 3-5: 2.3%

Students, Grades 6-12: 4.2%

Staff: 6.0%

Family: 1.7%

For more information, contact sccs@aaasb.org

Year	# of Districts	3-5	6-12	Staff	Family	TOTAL
2020	33	12,492	24,760	5,649	8,592	51,493
2021	33	7,896	15,407	4,685	6,261	34,249
2022	31	6,570	21,295	5,119	6,570	39,554
2023	33	10,774	20,421	4,709	6,164	42,068
2024	29	11,234	20,624	5,183	8,361	45,402
2025*	31	13,042 (73%)	24,585 (60%)	6,278 (61%)	12,642 (28%)	56,547

*Response rate %s were calculated in 2025 including schools that had at least 1 survey response.

Response rates are calculated by dividing the total # of responses by the total enrollment provided by each district.

Response rates are not as precise for the family survey as it is hard to determine the total # of family members eligible for the survey. For example, a student might have 1 or 2 parents take the survey, or a family might have several children enrolled in the district.