



#284-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #284-21

DATE: October 8, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **2022 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions**

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify school divisions that the 2022 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions will be administered to schools beginning January 10, 2022 and ending March 4, 2022. To reduce survey administrative burden, a partnership between the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) and the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) will coordinate the Virginia School Survey, which meets both VDOE's legislative requirement, [Item 143.G of the 2020 Appropriation Act](#), and DCJS's mandate as described in the [Code of Virginia §22.1-279.8.B](#).

The Virginia School Survey is a tool for division leaders and principals to monitor and ensure all students and staff have access to a healthy, safe and positive environment in which to learn, work, interact, and grow, whether remotely or in-person. In spite of the challenges posed by the coronavirus (COVID-19), the 2021 Virginia School Survey reached over 100,000 students, 80,000 classroom instructors, and 20,000 staff members. This equates to over 99% of eligible schools participating in the survey and an increase from 93% in the previous survey administration.

For 2022, any schools with regular education programs serving students in grades 9-12 are required to administer the student survey. In addition, divisions may choose to administer the survey to students in grades 9-12 in other educational settings (e.g., alternative or specialty

centers). Beginning in 2022, all schools will be required to invite all students in grades 9-12 to complete the survey, instead of having the option to survey only a random sample. This change increases the likelihood that all student groups (e.g. those defined along race/ethnicity, language proficiency, and disability status) are sampled and represented in the data.

Schools are also required to administer the survey to all licensed staff (instructional and support personnel) in any public schools serving grades 9-12. The survey may also be administered to non-licensed staff, and may be administered to adults in other educational settings (e.g., alternative or specialty centers) at the discretion of the school division. The survey will be administered to students and adults concurrently.

The Virginia School Survey is anonymous. Participants will not give their names on the survey, and it will not be possible to match survey answers to individual participants. Although teachers and staff will be asked to identify their role in the school, responses will be aggregated in school reports to protect their identity. A breakdown of results by role will be provided in the statewide report, but not in individual school reports.

Student and adult participation is voluntary. Parents of students will be advised by letter and offered the option of declining to participate. Adults may also decline to participate. Schools should strive to achieve a participation rate of at least 80 percent for both the students and adults. Higher response rates translate to a larger survey sample size which more accurately reflects perceptions among teachers, staff, and students. In other words, the more people who complete the survey, the better data you will have to base decisions about individual schools and divisions. Conversely, low response rates may mask areas of concern and celebration. For this reason, the random sample option of the survey has been eliminated and schools should offer the survey to all eligible participants. However, as previously stated, they have the option to not participate. Collecting quality data is critical given the importance of this survey to schools, divisions, and the Commonwealth.

Schools will receive a detailed report of survey results and will be able to compare their results to division, region, and state averages. To ensure that survey responses remain anonymous, School Participation Snapshots and School Survey Summary Reports will not be generated for schools with response rates less than 50 percent and if the number of respondents in each group are fewer than 10. Technical information on survey results will be

made available with the assistance of researchers from the School of Education at Virginia Tech.

Beginning in 2022, school divisions will be asked to administer the survey during one of two, four-week administration windows: January 10, 2022 through February 4, 2022 or February 7, 2022 through March 4, 2022. Schools should work with their division to plan their survey administration during their selected division window. All surveys are completed online and can be accessed through any device with an internet connection. The Virginia School Survey itself and complete instructions for administering the survey will be posted on the Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety website and the VDOE Working Conditions and Climate Survey page. Divisions may also link additional survey questions on local initiatives to the state survey to reduce survey burden. Additional instructions on submitting web links are forthcoming.

In October 2021, school divisions will be asked to notify the Virginia School Survey team of the following information via a web form:

- Selection of your school division's administration window: either January 10, 2022 through February 4, 2022 or February 7, 2022 through March 4, 2022;
- A school division primary point of contact with whom the Virginia School Survey team personnel can communicate updates on survey administration;
- Updated school principal contact information for participating schools;
- If desired, web links for additional survey questions.

After the initial web form is completed, school principals will be asked to provide the following to the Virginia School survey team via a web form:

- A school primary point of contact with whom the Virginia School Survey team personnel can communicate updates on survey administration.

The Virginia School Survey team, with representatives from VDOE and DCJS, will host a webinar on survey administration in December 2021. At that time, school principals and school points of contact will also receive specific instructions via email. Registration information for the webinar is forthcoming.

For more information

Questions about the Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions may be directed to Nikki Wilcox, Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety, at Nikki.Wilcox@dcjs.virginia.gov or 804-786-3923 and Dr. Jess Marcon Zabecki, Research Analyst, Office of Research at Jessica.Marconzabecki@doe.virginia.gov or 804-225-2963.

JFL/JMZ/NMW