Joint Report by the
Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services and
Virginia Department of Education on the

2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions

STATE TECHNICAL REPORT

October 2021

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Legislative Authority for Survey

Prior to the 2020–2021 school year, DCJS administered a school climate survey and VDOE administered a separate working conditions survey in response to separate legislative mandates.[1] Similarities in survey content and overlap in administration schedules provided an opportunity to consolidate survey requirements. In 2019, the Governor's Children's Cabinet's Student Safety Workgroup endorsed a recommendation[2] authorizing DCJS to conduct an annual school climate survey of students and staff in secondary schools (grades 6 through 12) in consultation with VDOE and the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. In the same year, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that modified the *Code of Virginia*[3] requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify and then consolidate, to the extent possible, all surveys and questionnaires of schools. Both legislative efforts intended to reduce survey burden on schools and eliminate duplicative efforts while providing statewide data to address school climate and working conditions issues.

To meet this intent, DCJS and VDOE began planning a consolidated survey effort in 2020 with the goal of combining each agency's required survey efforts into a single survey instrument and administration cycle. This effort was supported by a DCJS contract for survey administration with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) and a University of Virginia (UVA)-VDOE research partnership funded by a federal grant from the Institute of Education Sciences.

The 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions (the Virginia School Survey) is the product of an extensive survey consolidation effort that included in-depth comparisons of previously administered survey instruments and multiple reviews from content experts. Appendix A provides more details about the survey development process. DCJS and VDOE administered three versions of the survey during the 2021 administration cycle: the Student Survey for middle school students, the Classroom Instructors Survey for teachers and teacher's aides, and the Staff Survey for other licensed professionals and any interested non-licensed staff. Appendix B provides web links to the final survey instruments.

Results from the Virginia School Survey are intended to assist school and division personnel in understanding how connected students feel to their school, the quality of their relationships with other students and classroom instructors, and their feelings of safety. For classroom instructors and staff, the survey provides insights on their perceptions of the learning environment, support for their professional role, and with whom they collaborate to serve students well. The survey is not intended to be evaluative, but may be useful for understanding areas of strength and opportunity within school buildings.

While unanticipated at the onset of survey planning, the Virginia School Survey was administered for the first time during the height of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This created uncertain and evolving circumstances through which schools continued to provide educational services to students. DCJS and VDOE believed that it was critically important to understand the impact of the pandemic on climate and working conditions, even as classroom instructors, staff, and students were adapting to

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[1] VDOE's Teacher and Staff Working Conditions Surveys, last implemented in 2019, as required by Item 143.G of the 2020 Appropriation Act; and DCJS's Secondary School Climate Surveys, last implemented in 2020 in grades 9 through 12, as required by the *Code of Virginia §22.1-279.8.B*.

[2] https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/childrens-cabinet/Final-Recommendations-Student-Safety-Work-Group.pdf

[3] https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-23.2

new instructional circumstances. Results from this administration of the Virginia School Survey then become a tool for division leaders and principals to monitor progress towards a healthy and positive school environment in which students and staff can learn, work, interact, and grow.

Survey Methodology

DCJS and VDOE administered the Virginia School Survey between January 11 and March 19, 2021, and granted an extension until April 2 to late-responding schools so that they could increase their response rates. All surveys were completed online using school-specific access codes. This approach permitted each response to be linked back to the school while protecting respondents' identities. DCJS and VDOE provided each school with their access codes, and they were responsible for distributing them to their classroom instructors, staff, and students.

To prepare divisions and schools for survey administration, VDOE released Superintendent's Memo 242-20[4] on September 18, 2020, followed by informational webinars and email communications to divisions and schools over the next several months. VDOE and DCJS requested the following information: division- and school-level points of contact for the survey effort, a three-week window during which the surveys would be administered locally, a student sampling approach (discussed below), and the number of teachers, teacher's aides, other licensed staff, other non-licensed staff, and students enrolled in grades 6, 7, and 8. See Appendix C for additional information on survey communication efforts.

COVID-19 and its impact on public education informed the survey design and administration. For example, the 2021 survey asked respondents if they were working/learning from home and/or school. DCJS and VDOE carefully reviewed all survey items to ensure that they were relevant to in-person, hybrid, and remote learning modalities and restricted some questions to specific learning modalities where appropriate. This proved beneficial given that divisions were shifting instruction from remote to in-person over the course of the survey administration. When survey administration opened, 15 divisions were in-person and 42 were fully remote; when survey administration closed, 42 divisions were in-person and three were fully remote.[5]

During the administration period, DCJS and VDOE employed several tactics to boost survey response rates. For the first time, DCJS maintained an online survey response tracking system that schools and divisions could access to monitor the number of surveys received from their school and the response rates in near real-time. Schools aimed for a response rate of at least 80 percent per respondent group (or 25 students per grade if they chose the random sample option). DCJS and VDOE also maintained regular email communication with points of contact during their local administration and reached out via phone to division points of contact to enlist their help to improve response rates at schools that had not yet participated or had low response rates. Finally, the Virginia Education Association reached out to their members to encourage them to complete the survey.

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[4] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/administrators/superintendents_memos/2020/242-20.docx

[5] The remaining divisions were a combination of partial in person, all hybrid, or partial hybrid. See data for January 26th and April 5th at https://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/health_medical/office/reopen-status.shtml.

Sample

The school sample for classroom instructors and staff consisted of 1932 schools across all 132 divisions and the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. All public schools with regular education programs were required to participate (*n*=1855). In addition, several school divisions elected to include an additional 77 schools without regular education programs, such as Governor's Academies and alternative and technical education centers.

Instructions to all schools directed them to invite all licensed teachers to complete a survey as well as other individuals holding a state professional license, such as those with a Collegiate Professional License, Postgraduate Professional License, or Pupil Personnel Services License. Schools were also able to invite other non-licensed staff members to complete the survey. Teachers and teacher's aides completed the Classroom Instructors Survey. Based on the schools' reports, this sample included 96,711 teachers and 20,816 teacher's aides for a total of 117,527 individuals. All other licensed and non-licensed individuals completed the Staff Survey. This sample included a total of 55,985 individuals (29,743 licensed and 26,242 non-licensed).

The Student Survey focused on students in middle school. The school sample consisted of 342 schools of which 330 schools had regular education programs and were required to participate. Several divisions requested to include additional schools, which increased the sample by 12. Identifying schools for the Student Survey sample was complicated by the fact that divisions vary in how they assign grades 6–8 to schools. To reduce the burden on schools, we selected schools that served both grades 7 and 8 and did not serve grades pre-Kindergarten–5 or 9–12. DCJS and VDOE included students in grade 6 if the identified schools also served that grade.[6] The final school sample for the Student Survey included schools from 114 divisions.[7]

Divisions and schools opted to administer the survey to all students (the whole school option) or to 25 randomly selected students in each grade (the random sample option). More schools chose the whole school option than the random sample option (192 versus 150 schools, 56 percent versus 44 percent). DCJS provided schools with a random set of numbers to select students from each grade's alphabetized student roster for schools that selected the random sample option.

All students within sample schools were eligible to complete the survey. Instructions to schools indicated that reasonable accommodations should be provided to students when needed to complete the survey. Students were given the option to take the survey in English or Spanish, which permitted the inclusion of students identified as having Limited English Proficiency and spoke Spanish. See Appendix D for more information about the Spanish language administration. VDOE and DCJS provided schools with a letter to be sent home to parents and guardians to inform them of the survey and provide them an opportunity to decline permission for their student to participate.[8] Based on the schools' reports, the student survey sample included 162,437 students (48,893 in grade 6, 56,899 in grade 7, and 56,645 in grade 8).

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[6] There were 214 schools that served at least one grade between 6 and 8 that were not included in the sample, 161 of which were elementary schools that included grade 6. The remaining schools all included grades 9–12. Students in grades 6–8 at these schools may be surveyed in the years when the high school grades are surveyed.

[7] The 18 divisions that were not included were the small divisions that do not have a separate middle school. For example, in 12 divisions, grades 6 and 7 are grouped with the elementary school grades and grade 8 is grouped with the high school grades. These divisions were Bath, Bland, Buchanan, Charles City, Craig, Essex, Floyd, Giles, Highlands, King and Queen, Lancaster, Patrick, Rappahannock, and Richmond counties plus the cities of Covington, Norton, Colonial Beach, and West Point.

[8] The opt-out rate was low. Schools reported that parents opted out only 197 students.

Reporting

One goal of the Virginia School Survey is to provide timely data to divisions and schools to inform local efforts as soon as possible following survey completion. To support this goal, DCJS and VDOE generated and distributed two types of reports to divisions and schools. First, DCJS and VDOE provided schools (and their division) with a Snapshot Report within two weeks of their local administration window closing provided they had at least ten responses and a response rate of at least 50 percent. The Snapshot Reports, which included the distribution of responses to each survey question, were designed to quickly provide data back to schools in an easy-to-use format (see Appendix E for web links to state-level Snapshot Reports). Second, DCJS and VDOE created Division and School Summary Reports that included data to facilitate comparisons across schools within a division, to the region, and to the entire state. The Summary Reports were distributed in early June and highlighted key survey questions as well as measures of climate and working conditions (e.g., aggregates of survey items to reflect higher-order constructs such as student engagement, relationships among students, teacher leadership and autonomy, and managing student behavior).

Interpreting the Findings

The Virginia School Survey relies on self-reported data from survey respondents. DCJS and VDOE excluded incomplete surveys from the analysis, but made no other attempt to validate or verify survey responses. In addition, individuals who chose to respond to the survey may differ in important, but unknown, ways from all students, classroom instructors, and staff in schools. DCJS and VDOE used survey access codes with the intent to limit respondents to eligible individuals within specific schools, but this may not have completely prevented individuals outside of the school from accessing the survey. Results highlighted in this report should be interpreted with these limitations in mind. Table footnotes are provided, where applicable, to support interpretation of the results.

In order to calculate mean, points were awarded to each response on a four-point scale for the student survey (i.e., *Strongly Disagree–1, Disagree–2, Agree–3, Strongly Agree–4*) and on a six-point scale on the classroom instructor and staff survey (i.e., *Strongly Disagree–1, Disagree–2, Somewhat Disagree–3, Somewhat Agree–4, Agree–5, Strongly Agree–6*). Mean responses at 2.50 or above for students and 4.50 or above for classroom instructors and staff are generally considered to be positive. Several items presented to classroom instructors and staff have a six-point response scale while parallel questions for students have a four-point response scale. To aid in comparisons among respondent groups, the *Somewhat Agree* and *Agree* categories and the *Somewhat Disagree* and *Disagree* categories were collapsed and the mean scores rescaled from a six-point scale to a four-point scale. Table footnotes are provided, where applicable, to support interpretation of the results.

School Participation and Survey Response Rates

In spite of COVID-19 disruptions, nearly all schools participated in the 2021 survey administration, as measured by having at least one individual submitting a completed survey. School participation rates ranged from 97.7 percent for the staff survey to 99.2 percent for the classroom instructors survey and 99.4 percent for the student survey. Among all schools (participating and non-participating), 68.8 percent of classroom instructors (80,829 completed surveys) and 63.2 percent of students (102,592 completed surveys) responded. The response rate for staff was much lower at 37.3 percent (20,855 completed surveys).[9] See Table 1 for the summary of school participation and survey response rates.

The following table provides school participation and survey response rates by respondent group. Nearly all schools participated in the survey, with school participation rates ranging from 97.7 percent for the staff survey and 99.4 percent for the student survey. Response rates were high among classroom instructors (68.8 percent) and students (63.2 percent), and lowest among staff (37.3 percent).

The response rates are based on completed surveys only. All surveys were administered via the Qualtrics survey platform that records all initiated survey responses regardless of whether they are completed. For a survey response to be completed, the respondent was required to click the final submission button. Respondents, in submitting their survey, gave their consent to participate. Responses marked by Qualtrics as "spam" were also removed from analysis. This excluded six responses to the Classroom Instructors Survey, two responses to the Staff Survey, and four responses to the Student Survey.

Table 1. Virginia School Survey School Participation and Survey Response Rates

	Classroom Instructors Survey	Staff Survey	Students Survey
School Participation Rates	99.2% 1916 of 1932	97.7% 1889 of 1932	99.4% 340 of 342
Survey Response Rates	Overall 68.8%, n=80,829 Teachers 70.7%, n=68,414 Teacher's Aides 59.6%, n=12,411	Overall 37.3%, n=20,855 Licensed Staff 44.5%, n=13,228 Non-Licensed Staff 29.1%, n=7,627	Overall 63.2%, n=102,592 6th grade 63.5%, n=31,056 7th grade 63.6%, n=36,165 8th grade 62.4%, n=35,371

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[9] The results presented in this report include data from all completed responses. In some cases, the survey uses "skip logic" or "display logic" to tailor questions based on previous responses. These items have a lower response total; the total number of respondents for those items are noted in their respective tables.

Respondent Demographics

DCJS and VDOE collected additional contextual information on student, classroom instructor, and staff respondents to inform subsequent analysis and research studies using 2021 survey administration data.

The following tables summarize students' reported use of instructional support plans (Table 2) and classroom instructors' primary teaching assignments (Table 3) and staff's primary professional assignments (Table 4).

Table 5 provides a demographic summary of respondent race/ethnicity and gender for students, classroom instructors, and staff. Student respondents were more racially and ethnically diverse than classroom instructors and staff, consistent with reported statewide student and teacher demographics.[10]

Table 2. Percent of Student Respondents Endorsing Specific Types of Instructional Support Plans

Instructional Support Plan Type	Percentage Endorsed (n = 102,592)
Self-Reported Individualized Educational Plan	7.8
Self-Reported 504 Plan	3.1
Self-Reported Limited English Proficiency Plan	2.2

Table 3. Primary Teaching Assignment Reported by Classroom Instructors

Primary Teaching Assignment	Percentage (n=80,829)
Career and technical education	4.3
Computer science	0.4
Elementary and early childhood classroom teacher	34.6
English as a Second Language (ESL), English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	2.7
English language and literature (including composition, creative writing, journalism, reading)	7.9
Fine and performing arts (e.g., art, band, chorus, dance, music, theatre)	5.2
Foreign or world language and literature	2.5
Physical, health, and safety education	4.0
Social sciences and history (including civics, economics, geography, government, psychology, sociology)	5.6
Mathematics	7.0
Science	5.6
Special education, exceptional education, gifted education	20.1

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[10] See https://p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/buildatable/fallmembership for VDOE's annual student membership demographics and https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/workforce_data/index.shtml for VDOE's annual teacher race and ethnicity data.

Table 4. Primary Teaching Assignment Reported by Staff

Primary Professional Assignment	Percentage (*n*=20,855)
Assessment/testing	1.5
Athletics	1.1
Community and family engagement	1.4
Custodial and facilities	5.0
Health services	5.6
Information and technology services	2.7
Learning specialists/coaches	7.3
Library and media	6.1
School administration	15.0
School nutrition	4.2
School office support	15.4
School safety	1.9
Special education support	4.9
Special programs	1.0
Student support services (e.g., counseling, psychology, and social work)	19.4
Transportation	0.3
Other	7.4

Table 5. The Percentage of Survey Respondents by Racial or Ethnic and Gender Identities

Demographics	Percent of Respondents		
	Student	**Classroom Instructors**	**Staff**
Racial or Ethnic Identity Endorsed	(*n*=102,592)	(*n*=80,829)	(*n*=20,855)
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.7	0.2	0.2
Asian	6.1	2.0	1.5
Black or African American	18.3	11.1	17.1
Hispanic	18.8	4.3	5.2
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1
Two or More Races	10.4	4.1	4.1
White	41.4	75.8	69.9
Other*	4.2	2.3	1.8
Gender Identity Endorsed**	(*n*=102,349)	(*n*=80,654)	(*n*=20,800)
Female	49.3	82.0	83.0
Male	46.3	16.9	16.0
Prefer to Self-Describe*	4.2	0.9	0.7

* Respondents who selected "Other" or "Prefer to Self-Describe" were asked to write in their race or gender
identity through an open text response. The responses provided were not assessed for validity.
** 0.2% of students, 0.2% of classroom instructors, and 0.3% of staff did not answer this question.

Global Perceptions of School Climate and Working Conditions

The Virginia School Survey poses several questions to students to assess overall (global) perceptions of school climate and to classroom instructors and staff to assess global perceptions of working conditions.

Table 6. Global Climate Mean Ratings and Response Categories by Respondent Type

Global Climate Measure	Respondent	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
			Very Negative	*Negative*	*Positive*	*Very Positive*
How positive or negative is the atmosphere of the school?	Students *(n=102,592)*	2.95	3.1	13.7	67.8	15.4
Global Climate Measure	**Respondent**	**Mean**	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn.	Classroom Instructors *(n=80,829)*	3.37*	3.6	3.9	51.6	40.9
	Staff *(n=20,855)*	3.47*	4.4	2.0	42.7	50.8

* Adult survey means are adjusted from a six-point to a four-point scale to aid comparison.[11]

Table 7. Respondents' Perceptions of Global Climate Measures by Gender

Global Climate Measure	Gender Identity	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
			Very Negative	*Negative*	*Positive*	*Very Positive*
Students: How positive or negative is the atmosphere of the school? *(n=102,592)*	Male	2.99	3.0	11.8	68.6	16.6
	Female	2.95	2.9	14.4	67.8	14.9
	Prefer to Self-Describe	2.66	7.6	25.6	59.5	7.3
Global Climate Measure	**Gender Identity**	**Mean**	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Classroom Instructors: Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn. *(n=80,829)*	Male	3.34	4.4	4.2	52.2	39.2
	Female	3.39	3.4	3.7	51.3	41.6
	Prefer to Self-Describe	2.87	4.4	16.9	62.0	16.7
Staff: Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn. *(n=20,855)*	Male	3.49	5.1	1.9	38.6	54.5
	Female	3.47	4.3	2.0	43.3	50.4
	Prefer to Self-Describe	3.04	4.2	11.2	61.1	23.6

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[11] Several items presented to classroom instructors and staff have a six-point response scale (i.e., *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Somewhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree*). However, parallel questions for students have a four-point response scale (i.e., *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*). To aid in comparisons among respondent groups, the *Somewhat Agree* and *Agree* categories and the *Somewhat Disagree* and *Disagree* categories were collapsed and the mean scores rescaled from a six-point scale to a four-point scale.

Table 8. Respondents' Perceptions of Global Climate Measure by Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
		Very Negative	*Negative*	*Positive*	*Very Positive*
Students: How positive or negative is the atmosphere of the school? *(n=102,592)*					
Total	2.95	3.1	13.7	67.8	15.4
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.97	5.6	12.8	60.9	20.8
Asian	3.11	1.2	7.7	69.6	21.5
Black or African American	2.86	4.7	17.4	65.3	12.6
Hispanic	2.92	3.6	14.3	68.2	13.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2.95	4.4	14.6	62.8	18.2
Two or More Races	2.90	4.1	16.1	65.7	14.1
White	3.00	2.1	12.1	69.4	16.4
Other	2.95	4.3	13.8	64.3	17.6
Race or Ethnicity	Mean	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Classroom Instructors: Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn. *(n=80,829)*					
Total	3.37	3.6	3.9	51.6	40.9
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.22	5.8	5.0	54.4	34.8
Asian	3.46	3.8	2.1	47.1	46.9
Black or African American	3.29	4.6	4.2	55.2	36.1
Hispanic	3.37	4.6	3.3	49.3	42.9
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.40	2.4	2.4	58.5	36.6
Two or More Races	3.25	3.5	6.4	57.2	32.9
White	3.40	3.3	3.7	50.7	42.3
Other	3.05	5.0	10.1	61.2	23.7
Race or Ethnicity	Mean	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Staff: Overall, my school is a good place to work and learn. *(n=20,855)*					
Total	3.47	4.4	2.0	42.7	50.8
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.24	4.0	8.0	56.0	32.0
Asian	3.37	8.3	1.6	41.5	48.6
Black or African American	3.37	5.2	2.5	51.1	42.2
Hispanic	3.41	5.8	1.7	42.9	49.6
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.39	8.7	0.0	39.1	52.2
Two or More Races	3.34	4.3	5.0	49.0	41.7
White	3.52	4.0	1.7	40.2	54.1
Other	3.15	6.2	7.5	55.0	31.4

Impact of COVID-19 on School Climate and Working Conditions

The Virginia School Survey included several new questions for the 2021 survey administration to deduce the impact of COVID-19 disruptions on respondents' perceptions of school climate and classroom instructors' and staff's perceptions of working conditions. Respondents were asked to first reflect on whether the climate or working conditions in their school had become better or worse. Then, each respondent group was asked to identify the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a perceived change in climate or working conditions.

Table 9. Perceived Change in Climate by Respondent Type

Respondent	Mean	**Percent of Respondents**					
		Much Worse	*Somewhat Worse*	*Same*	*Somewhat Better*	*Much Better*	*No Opinion*
Has the climate become better or worse?							
Students* (n=63,005)	3.19	1.9	6.9	35.1	12.3	5.2	38.6
Classroom Instructors (n=80,829)	3.73	2.5	12.0	40.9	16.6	10.7	17.3
Staff (n=20,855)	4.04	1.1	6.9	35.5	18.8	18.2	19.4

* Student sample size (*n*) is 63,005, as they only received this question if they attended this school previously.

Table 10. Perceived Change in Working Conditions by Classroom Instructors and Staff Respondents

Respondent	Mean	**Percent of Respondents**					
		Much Worse	*Somewhat Worse*	*Same*	*Somewhat Better*	*Much Better*	*No Opinion*
Over the last two years, working conditions have become…							
Classroom Instructors (80,829)	3.23	4.8	13.7	36.2	13.7	14.1	17.5
Staff (n=20,855)	3.65	1.8	7.5	32.1	15.9	23.8	18.9

Table 11. The Impact of COVID on Climate for Those Respondents Who Indicated a Change in Climate

Respondent	Climate	Mean	Percent of Respondents				
			Not at All	*Very Little*	*Some*	*Very Much*	*The Only Reason*
To what extent do you think COVID-19 contributed to this change in the school's climate?							
Students (*n*=27,043)	*Better*	3.44	7.0	10.4	28.0	41.0	13.5
	Worse	3.49	9.3	11.0	19.4	41.8	18.4
Classroom Instructors (*n*=33,790)	*Better*	3.37	9.7	11.0	34.4	40.7	4.1
	Worse	3.84	3.7	5.7	16.4	51.1	23.1
Staff (*n*=9,404)	*Better*	3.17	9.9	13.2	39.8	34.9	2.2
	Worse	3.68	7.5	8.5	17.1	42.7	24.3

* "Better" includes *Somewhat Better* and *Much Better* responses. "Worse" includes *Much Worse* and *Somewhat Worse* responses.

Table 12. The Impact of COVID-19 on Working Conditions for Those Respondents Who Indicated a Change in Working Conditions

Respondent	Climate	Mean	Percent of Respondents				
			Not at All	*Very Little*	*Some*	*Very Much*	*The Only Reason*
To what extent do you think COVID-19 contributed to this change in working conditions for staff?							
Classroom Instructors (*n*=37,469)	*Better*	3.21	10.5	10.9	31.3	41.9	5.4
	Worse	3.61	4.4	8.6	24.3	47.5	15.2
Staff (*n*=10,282)	*Better*	3.10	10.5	12.5	36.6	37.8	2.7
	Worse	3.35	10.3	12.4	25.8	35.1	16.4

Comparisons Across Respondent Groups: Items of Interest

The Virginia School Survey captures similar information on climate and working conditions across the three surveyed groups, providing an opportunity for timely comparisons across students, classroom instructors, and staff. This section captures key measures of primary interest, based in part on recent legislative requirements or agency priorities.

Five C's of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate

Virginia recently revised graduation requirements, effective for the Class of 2022 and beyond, to define the "Profile of a Virginia Graduate" as a student who meets high academic standards, demonstrates workplace skills, develops a sense of community and civic responsibility, and has a career plan aligned with their interests and experiences. As such, schools are required to ensure that students develop the competencies known as the "Five C's": Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Citizenship. Students and classroom instructors rated the extent to which they agree or disagree with five statements intended to capture implementation of the Five C's in the classroom.

Table 13: Students' and Classroom Instructors' Perceptions of Five C's of the Profile of a Virginia Graduate (Students n=102,592; Classroom Instructors n=80,829; Staff n=20,855)

Question	Respondent	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
			Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Teachers at this school expect students to use facts and evidence to support their ideas.	Students	3.34	0.7	2.2	59.4	37.7
	Classroom Instructors	3.37*	0.2	2.3	71.0	26.6
Teachers at this school want students to think about different ways to solve problems.	Students	3.29	1.0	5.0	57.8	36.3
	Classroom Instructors	3.41*	0.2	2.7	65.7	31.4
Teachers at this school encourage students to provide constructive feedback to other students	Students	3.07	1.8	14.1	59.5	24.6
	Classroom Instructors	3.20*	0.2	6.8	73.0	20.0
Teachers at this school encourage students to value and search for a diversity of opinions, perspectives, and abilities.	Students	3.18	1.6	8.4	60.8	29.3
	Classroom Instructors	3.25*	0.4	5.9	69.5	24.2
Teachers at this school often connect what students are learning to life outside the classroom.	Students	2.91	4.6	20.9	53.2	21.4
	Classroom Instructors	3.30*	0.3	4.2	70.6	24.9

* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Cultural Competency

In response to legislation passed during the 2021 General Assembly, the Virginia Board of Education updated its teacher performance standards and evaluation criteria to require an evaluation of cultural competency. Under the revised guidance, classroom instructors are expected to provide instruction and classroom strategies that result in culturally inclusive and responsive learning environments.

In 2021, the Virginia School Survey asked students, classroom instructors, and staff to indicate their level of agreement with items that broadly address perceptions of culturally competent instruction and culturally inclusive environments in schools.

Table 14. Perceptions of Culturally Competent Instruction and Services by Respondent Type

Culturally Competent Instruction and Services	Respondent	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
			Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
The things I learn at this school reflect multiple cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.	Students *(n=102,592)*	2.95	4.6	17.3	56.8	21.3
The content taught at this school reflects multiple cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.	Classroom Instructors *(n-80,829)*	3.11*	1.1	10.3	68.1	20.5
Adults at this school provide supports and services that reflect students' cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, and identities.	Staff *(n=20,855)*	3.22*	1.4	8.7	63.4	26.5

* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Table 15. Classroom Instructor and Staff Responses to Survey Items Addressing Culturally Inclusive Environments (Classroom Instructors n=80,829; Staff n=20,855)

Question	Respondent	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
			Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Adults at this school recognize and value each individual's cultural background.	Classroom Instructors	3.38*	0.6	5.1	58.7	35.6
	Staff	3.39*	0.6	4.2	59.2	36.0
Teachers and Staff are treated fairly regardless of their race, ethnicity, or culture.	Classroom Instructors	3.45*	1.6	4.7	49.8	43.8
	Staff	3.57*	1.0	2.9	43.2	52.9
My school is committed to providing an inclusive environment for individuals from varied racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.	Classroom Instructors	3.44*	0.9	3.9	55.3	40.0
	Staff	3.53*	0.7	2.5	49.7	47.2

* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

School Resource Officers

The Virginia School Survey asked students, classroom instructors, and staff members to rate their perceptions of School Resource Officers (SRO). According to the *Code of Virginia*, SROs are "a certified law enforcement officer hired by the local law enforcement agency to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools."[12] SROs work in partnership with law enforcement agencies, school administrators, and school divisions to contribute to safe and supportive schools.

*Table 16. Perceptions of the School Resource Officer by Respondent Type
(Students n=26,209, Classroom Instructors n=50,374, and Staff n=14,068)*

Question	Respondent	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The school resource officer (SRO) makes me feel safe at this school.	Students	3.25	2.4	7.4	53.6	36.6
	Classroom Instructors	3.21*	1.9	8.4	58.5	31.1
	Staff	3.33*	1.4	6.9	53.1	38.6
The school resource officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to our school.	Students	3.31	1.7	5.1	53.7	39.5
	Classroom Instructors	3.18*	1.7	7.5	55.7	35.2
	Staff	3.37*	1.4	6.1	51.1	41.4

Note. These questions were only asked of respondents who answered "Yes" to the prompt: *"Does your school have an SRO?"* Sample sizes are the same across both questions.
* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

[12] *Va. Code* § 9.1-101, at: https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title9.1/chapter1/section9.1-101/.

Table 17. Responses to "The school resource officer (SRO) makes me feel safe"
by Respondent Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students (*n=26,209*)					
Total	3.25	2.4	7.4	53.6	36.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.23	4.2	7.0	50.7	38.1
Asian	3.26	1.5	6.0	58.0	34.5
Black/African American	3.13	3.8	9.9	55.2	31.0
Hispanic	3.20	2.7	8.2	55.3	33.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.29	2.9	5.9	50.0	41.2
Two or More Races	3.16	2.9	11.2	53.3	32.6
White	3.29	1.9	6.1	52.9	39.1
Other	3.17	3.9	8.9	53.5	33.8
Classroom Instructors* (*n=50,374*)					
Total	3.21	1.9	8.4	58.5	31.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.13	4.3	10.7	55.9	29.0
Asian	3.32	0.6	5.3	59.1	31.9
Black/African American	3.19	2.2	7.8	61.1	28.8
Hispanic	3.22	2.4	7.7	58.3	31.6
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.15	4.5	2.3	70.5	22.7
Two or More Races	3.13	2.7	9.9	58.6	28.8
White	3.22	1.8	8.4	58.2	31.6
Other	3.03	3.9	14.1	54.6	27.4
Staff* (*n=14,068*)					
Total	3.33	1.4	6.9	53.1	38.6
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.24	2.8	16.7	36.1	44.4
Asian	3.38	0.7	5.3	54.3	39.7
Black/African American	3.30	1.7	6.0	57.9	34.3
Hispanic	3.37	2.1	5.9	48.3	43.6
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.60	0.0	0.0	53.4	46.7
Two or More Races	3.24	1.5	9.2	55.6	33.9
White	3.33	1.2	6.9	52.3	39.6
Other	3.17	3.2	12.8	47.8	36.3

Note. These questions were only asked of respondents who answered "Yes" to the prompt: *"Does your school have an SRO?"* Sample sizes are the same across both questions.
* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Table 18. Responses to "The school resource officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to our school" by Respondent Race and Ethnicity

Race or Ethnicity	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Students (n=26,209)					
Total	3.31	1.7	5.1	53.7	39.5
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.28	1.9	9.3	47.9	40.9
Asian	3.29	2.9	4.2	53.6	39.3
Black/African American	3.24	2.2	6.4	57.2	34.2
Hispanic	3.26	2.2	5.4	56.7	35.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.29	2.9	2.9	55.9	38.2
Two or More Races	3.26	2.4	7.0	53.0	37.7
White	3.35	1.3	4.5	52.5	41.6
Other	3.26	2.2	6.7	53.7	37.4
Classroom Instructors* (n=26,209)					
Total	3.28	1.9	8.4	58.5	31.1
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.18	2.2	8.6	59.2	30.1
Asian	3.34	0.4	5.9	60.7	32.9
Black/African American	3.29	1.7	6.4	59.1	32.7
Hispanic	3.27	2.2	6.2	57.3	34.4
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.29	4.5	2.3	56.6	36.4
Two or More Races	3.23	2.0	8.6	55.3	34.1
White	3.29	1.6	7.5	55.2	35.7
Other	3.15	3.6	10.9	52.0	33.4
Staff* (n=14,068)					
Total	3.37	1.4	6.1	51.1	41.4
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.26	2.8	11.1	44.5	41.7
Asian	3.38	0.0	5.3	54.3	40.4
Black/African American	3.35	1.7	4.9	57.2	36.2
Hispanic	3.38	2.4	5.5	47.7	44.3
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.55	0.0	0.0	53.3	46.7
Two or More Races	3.27	1.3	8.0	55.7	35.0
White	3.38	1.3	6.3	49.7	42.8
Other	3.23	3.6	10.4	46.2	39.8

Note. These questions were only asked of respondents who answered "Yes" to the prompt: *"Does your school have an SRO?"* Sample sizes are the same across both questions.
* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Bullying Prevalence and Experiences.

The *Code of Virginia* defines bullying as "any aggressive and unwanted behavior that is intended to harm, intimidate, or humiliate the victim; involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the aggressor or aggressors and victim; and is repeated over time or causes severe emotional trauma. 'Bullying' includes cyber bullying. 'Bullying' does not include ordinary teasing, horseplay, argument, or peer conflict."[13]

Since 2005, legislative actions within the Commonwealth require school boards to implement bullying prevention activities,[14] educate employees about creating bully-free environments,[15] and include bullying as a prohibited behavior within student codes of conduct.[16]

The Virginia School Survey leverages the *Code's* definition to capture students', classroom instructors', and staff's perceptions of bullying behaviors within their school environments.[17]

Table 19. Perceptions of Bullying by Respondent Type

Respondent	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
		Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Bullying is a problem at this school.					
Students *(102,592)*	2.69	16.2	48.6	23.2	12.0
Classroom Instructors *(n=80,829)*	3.09*	22.4	60.7	16.0	1.0
Staff *(20,855)*	3.17*	27.7	57.5	13.7	1.0

* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

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[13] *Va. Code* § 22.1-276.01, at: https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter14/section22.1-276.01/.
[14] *Va. Code* § 22.1-208.01, at: https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter13/section22.1-208.01/.
[15] *Va. Code* § 22.1-291.4, at: https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter15/section22.1-291.4/.
[16] *Va. Code* § 22.1-279.6.D, at: https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title22.1/chapter14/section22.1-279.6/.
[17] Several bullying survey items were modified to address the unique, virtual educational environment of the 2020–2021 school year given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 20. Perceptions of Students Being Bullied about Their Race or
Ethnicity By Race or Ethnicity and Respondent Type

Race or Ethnicity	Mean	Percent of Respondents			
		Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
Students					
(n=102,592)					
Total	2.99	27.2	50.6	16.5	5.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.99	32.2	43.3	15.9	8.7
Asian	3.03	28.9	50.1	15.8	5.2
Black/African American	2.84	21.4	49.8	20.2	8.6
Hispanic	2.88	21.9	51.4	19.9	6.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2.84	19.0	52.6	21.9	6.6
Two or More Races	2.94	26.2	48.9	17.9	7.0
White	3.12	31.9	51.8	13.0	3.4
Other	2.95	28.4	45.8	18.5	7.4
Classroom Instructors					
(n=80,829)					
Total	3.18	26.4	59.9	13.0	0.8
American Indian or Alaska Native	2.98	23.2	52.9	21.0	2.9
Asian	3.29	34.9	52.9	11.6	0.7
Black/African American	3.13	25.7	58.8	14.2	1.3
Hispanic	3.19	29.6	55.9	13.0	1.5
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.33	32.9	58.5	8.5	0.0
Two or More Races	3.12	25.8	58.4	14.5	1.4
White	3.19	26.2	60.6	12.6	0.6
Other	3.07	24.6	56.7	16.6	2.0
Staff					
(n=20,855)					
Total	3.24	30.7	56.9	11.7	0.7
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.2	28.0	58.0	14.0	0.0
Asian	3.17	34.5	48.6	15.0	1.9
Black/African American	3.15	27.5	56.7	14.6	1.2
Hispanic	3.15	32.1	49.4	16.7	1.8
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	3.31	26.1	69.5	4.3	0.0
Two or More Races	3.10	27.8	53.5	17.5	1.3
White	3.28	31.6	57.9	10.1	0.5
Other	3.12	26.5	57.9	14.5	1.1

Note. Students were asked how strongly they agree or disagree with the statement *'Students at this school are bullied about their race or ethnicity.'* Therefore, higher mean scores indicate that the respondents perceive less bullying
* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Table 21. Reasons for Why Students are Bullied by Respondent Type

		Percent of Respondents			
	Mean	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Students *(n=97,064)*					
Their Disability	2.97	29.5	45.6	17.5	7.5
Their Sexual Orientation	2.91	25.3	48.3	19.0	7.5
Their Clothing or Physical Appearance	2.65	18.5	40.3	28.9	12.2
During On-Line Instruction*	3.23	37.4	51.3	8.1	3.2
Classroom Instructors** *(n=80,829)*					
Their Disability	3.24	29.4	59.0	10.8	0.7
Their Sexual Orientation	3.18	27.8	57.7	13.4	1.1
Their Clothing or Physical Appearance	3.01	21.0	57.3	20.4	1.2
Staff** *(n=20,855)*					
Their Disability	3.34	35.7	55.3	8.4	0.6
Their Sexual Orientation	3.25	32.2	55.3	11.7	0.8
Their Clothing or Physical Appearance	3.10	25.6	56.0	17.2	1.1

* Only asked of students (*n*=97,064), and not those who only received in-person instruction.
** Means converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Table 22. Adults at this school are good at addressing bullying/
I feel equipped to successfully handle incidents of bullying.

		Percent of Respondents			
	Mean	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Students *(n=102,592)*	2.90	29.5	45.6	17.5	7.5
Classroom Instructors* *(n=80,829)*	3.17	0.9	8.2	70.9	20.1
Staff* *(n=20,855)*	3.33	0.6	4.9	65.3	29.2

* Means converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Addressing Racially-Motivated Behaviors

DCJS and VDOE added items to the 2021 survey administration to better understand respondents' confidence in addressing racially-motivated behaviors. The item summarized in Table 16 was posed to classroom instructors, staff, and students within a series of items on managing student behavior.

Table 23: Student, Classroom Instructor, and Staff Responses to
Survey Item on Addressing Racially-Motivated Behaviors

			Percent of Respondents			
Question	**Respondent**	**Mean**	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
Adults at this school are good at addressing racially-motivated behaviors.	Students *(n=102,592)*	3.01	4.9	13.3	57.6	24.2
I am equipped to handle racially-motivated behaviors.	Classroom Instructors *(n=80,829)*	2.96*	2.0	16.4	65.8	15.8
	Staff *(n=20,855)*	3.19*	1.0	8.9	66.7	23.5

* Converted from a six-point scale for ease of comparison.

Summary of Survey Measures for Students

For 2021, the Virginia School Survey assessed multiple indicators of school climate, such as relationships with others, school connectedness, social-emotional learning, and safety, among students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Table 17 summarizes mean responses for each survey measure, and disaggregates results by gender, and race and ethnicity.

*Table 24. Summary of Mean Response by Survey Measure, Overall
and by Respondent Gender and Race/Ethnicity (n=102,592)*

Measure	Overall	Gender			Race or Ethnicity							
		Male	Female	Self-Describe	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Pacific	Two or More Races	White	Other
Relationships among students	3.00	3.03	3.02	2.67	2.99	3.09	2.89	2.94	2.92	3.02	3.09	2.95
Relationships between students and adults	3.29	3.31	3.30	2.98	3.29	3.37	3.23	3.29	3.22	3.30	3.34	3.26
Student Engagement	3.16	3.17	3.17	2.82	3.13	3.26	3.08	3.15	3.08	3.16	3.20	3.13
School Connectedness	2.73	2.72	2.77	2.52	2.73	2.71	2.73	2.60	2.75	2.76	2.79	2.66
Rigorous Instruction	3.12	3.13	3.14	2.90	3.13	3.21	3.10	3.10	3.02	3.13	3.14	3.09
Social-emotional Learning	3.05	3.04	3.09	2.78	3.00	3.19	2.94	3.01	2.93	3.07	3.12	3.00
Managing Student Behavior	3.05	3.10	3.04	2.70	3.10	3.19	2.98	3.07	3.02	3.05	3.08	3.03
Student Aggression (self-concerns)*	2.01	1.94	2.04	2.37	2.12	1.99	2.17	2.05	2.34	1.99	1.94	2.03
Student Aggression (behaviors of others)*	1.22	1.23	1.15	1.39	1.30	1.17	1.28	1.18	1.51	1.19	1.17	1.26
Bullying*	2.10	2.00	2.15	2.39	2.10	1.94	2.28	2.14	2.26	2.08	2.00	2.10
Perceptions of Safety	3.34	3.78	3.33	2.99	3.23	3.35	3.23	3.26	3.21	3.35	3.39	3.23
School Resource Officer (SRO)	3.28	3.30	3.28	2.95	3.26	3.27	3.18	3.24	3.16	3.29	3.32	3.22

Note: Except where noted, responses are based on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." As such, mean responses at 2.50 or above are generally considered positive.
* Items are reverse coded (e.g., Students were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as *'Bullying is a problem at this school'* therefore, a lower mean response indicates fewer student concerns with bullying and aggression).

*Table 25. Summary of Mean Response by Survey Measure, Overall
and by Respondent Grade and Locality Type (n=102,592)*

Measure	Overall	Grade			Locale		
		6	7	8	City	Suburban	Town/Rural
Relationships among students	3.00	3.10	2.99	2.95	2.92	3.04	3.04
Relationships between students and adults	3.29	3.42	3.28	3.19	3.26	3.30	3.31
Student Engagement	3.16	3.28	3.15	3.06	3.12	3.17	3.17
School Connectedness	2.73	2.78	2.73	2.71	2.72	2.72	2.77
Rigorous Instruction	3.12	3.2	3.12	3.06	3.13	3.12	3.12
Social-emotional Learning	3.05	3.09	3.04	3.03	3.00	3.09	3.05
Managing Student Behavior	3.05	3.22	3.04	2.92	3.02	3.06	3.06
Student Aggression (self-concerns)*	2.01	1.78	2.08	2.17	2.19	1.96	1.99
Student Aggression (behaviors of others)*	1.22	1.10	1.23	1.26	1.25	1.17	1.20
Bullying*	2.10	1.97	2.11	2.17	2.21	2.03	2.09
Perceptions of Safety	3.34	3.42	3.32	3.27	3.29	3.34	3.34
School Resource Officer (SRO)	3.28	3.39	3.27	3.20	3.25	3.26	3.30

Note: Except where noted, responses are based on a four-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." As such, mean responses at 2.50 or above are generally considered positive.

* Items are reverse coded (e.g., Students were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as 'Bullying is a problem at this school' therefore, a lower mean response indicates fewer student concerns with bullying and aggression).

Mental Health Challenges and Supports

The 2021 administration of the Virginia School Survey included several new items on students' experiences with mental health and the supports available. These questions were drawn from validated screening tools that are intended to identify, but not diagnose, those at risk for anxiety and depression.[18,19]

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[18] See page 13 of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey Questionnaire Content, available at: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/2019/YRBS_questionnaire_content_1991-2019.pdf.

[19] Kroenke, K., Spitzer, R. L., Williams, J. B.W., & Löwe, B. (2009). An ultra-brief screening scale for anxiety and depression: The PHQ-4. *Psychosomatics, 50,* 613-621.

Table 26. Percent of Students Reporting Yes to Depressive or Anxiety Questions (n=102,592)

Measure	Overall	Race and Ethnicity									Gender		
		American Indian / Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic	Nat. Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Other	Male	Female	Self-Describe	
Depressive Type Behavior	33.6	33.2	29.6	34.0	39.9	37.2	38.3	30.0	33.8	23.0	40.6	68.8
Anxiety	50.0	41.5	51.9	43.0	52.1	55.5	54.6	51.3	46.4	36.8	60.0	79.2
Worry	38.6	33.6	39.5	33.7	41.8	40.9	43.5	38.4	36.0	26.3	47.4	71.9

Table 27. Percent of Students Reporting Yes to Questions on Suicide and Suicidal Ideation

Question	Overall	Race and Ethnicity								Gender		
		American Indian / Alaska	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic	Nat. Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Two or more Races	White	Other	Male	Female	Self-Describe
Seriously Consider Suicide *(n=102,592)*	10.1	10.9	7.7	11.2	12.2	13.9	13.3	8.2	8.6	5.6	11.7	39.0
*Did you seek help** (n=10,297)*	30.0	27.5	21.0	23.7	32.0	42.1	29.1	33.8	30.5	28.8	29.6	33.0
*Suicide Plan** (n=10,297)*	57.1	48.8	54.0	58.3	60.7	42.1	58.2	53.7	63.5	46.8	59.2	66.2
*Suicide Attempt*** (n=5,872)*	60.4	66.7	46.3	65.5	67.3	62.5	63.0	52.6	59.6	57.3	60.6	63.0
Tell an adult about a student in need *(n=102,592)*	85.5	82.8	88.3	82.4	83.5	80.3	82.8	88.3	82.8	84.9	87.2	71.6
Suicide Prevention training *(n=102,592)*	12.4	15.3	11.1	10.5	11.9	14.6	14.1	13.2	11.9	10.7	13.0	24.2

* These questions were only asked of the students who reported they had seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months (*n*=10,297).

** This question was only asked of the students who reported they had made a plan (*n*=5,872).

Summary of Survey Measures for Classroom Instructors

Classroom instructors, including licensed teachers and teacher's aides, provided their insights on 15 measures of working conditions. The aggregate, state-level results appear below, presented alongside the mean responses for each survey measure disaggregated by school level and locale type (see Table 28). Statewide results are instructive for how classroom instructors feel broadly about the environments in which they teach and work. These patterns differ by the key demographic groups represented below, although they are not inclusive of all the ways that these findings may vary (e.g., by primary professional assignment, years of teaching experience). Localities are encouraged to use school- and division-level reports and data sets to examine patterns in perceptions of working conditions that may differ in their specific school buildings.

Table 28. Summary of Mean Response by Survey Measure, Overall and by School Level and Locale Type (n=80,829)

Measure	Overall	School Level			Locale Type		
		Elementary	Middle	High	City	Suburban	Town/ Rural
Teaching Leadership and Autonomy	4.35	4.24	4.40	4.40	4.29	4.31	4.41
Physical Environment	4.87	4.83	4.93	4.85	4.78	4.90	4.90
Student Engagement	4.65	4.90	4.43	4.32	4.60	4.70	4.62
Relationships among Students	4.90	5.04	4.74	4.75	4.82	4.95	4.89
Relationships between Students and Adults	5.29	5.38	5.23	5.14	5.26	5.32	5.27
Rigorous Instruction	4.91	4.98	4.86	4.78	4.93	4.95	4.85
Professional Growth Opportunities	4.40	4.44	4.39	4.24	4.44	4.41	4.35
Managing Student Behavior	4.70	4.80	4.64	4.52	4.65	4.71	4.71
Parental Involvement	4.94	5.09	4.82	4.72	4.95	4.98	4.90
School Leadership	4.95	5.05	4.92	4.77	4.92	4.98	4.94
Safety	5.04	5.10	5.05	4.94	4.89	5.08	5.09
Bullying**	2.85	2.68	3.06	3.03	2.90	2.83	2.85
Student Aggression**	1.24	1.25	1.24	1.21	1.27	1.22	1.23
School Resource Officer (SRO)	4.87	4.84	4.88	4.86	4.74	4.86	4.94

Note: Except where noted, responses are based on a six-item scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." As such, mean responses at 4.50 or above are generally considered to be positive.

* Questions are scored as "Yes," "No," "Do not know"; higher scores indicate more new teacher support.

** Items are reverse coded (e.g., Staff were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as 'Bullying is a problem at this school' therefore, lower mean response indicates fewer staff concerns with bullying and student aggression).

Table 29. Summary of Mean Response for Survey Measures Overall and by Classroom Instructor Gender and Race or Ethnicity (n=80,829)

Measure	Overall	Race or Ethnicity								Gender		
		American Indian/ Alaska	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Nat. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Other	Male	Female	Self-Describe
Teaching Leadership and Autonomy	4.35	4.24	4.51	4.40	4.36	4.23	4.15	4.35	3.87	4.51	4.31	3.63
Physical Environment	4.87	4.71	5.02	4.80	4.92	4.73	4.74	4.89	4.54	4.95	4.86	4.35
Student Engagement	4.65	4.56	4.84	4.57	4.72	4.67	4.56	4.67	4.38	4.44	4.7	4.11
Relationships among students	4.90	4.85	5.03	4.85	4.96	5.01	4.83	4.91	4.67	4.81	4.92	4.51
Relationships between students and adults	5.29	5.25	5.39	5.13	5.27	5.24	5.20	5.32	5.04	5.23	5.31	4.90
Rigorous Instruction	4.91	4.87	5.08	4.84	4.97	4.93	4.84	4.92	4.71	4.87	4.93	4.57
Professional Growth Opportunities	4.40	4.42	4.81	4.63	4.56	4.33	4.31	4.35	4.10	4.37	4.41	3.67
Managing Student Behavior	4.70	4.63	4.94	4.79	4.78	4.73	4.58	4.69	4.41	4.70	4.70	4.06
Parental Involvement	4.94	4.96	5.09	5.01	5.01	4.91	4.89	4.94	4.73	4.79	4.98	4.49
School Leadership	4.95	4.84	5.15	4.96	5.00	5.04	4.77	4.97	4.44	4.93	4.97	4.07
Safety	5.04	4.95	5.13	4.89	5.05	5.07	4.91	5.08	4.73	5.07	5.04	4.52
Bullying	2.85	3.02	2.72	2.93	2.81	2.66	2.88	2.84	2.92	2.90	2.83	3.02
Student Aggression	1.24	1.32	1.16	1.24	1.21	1.27	1.27	1.23	1.35	1.23	1.23	1.41
School Resource Officer (SRO)	4.87	4.74	5.00	4.86	4.87	4.83	4.77	4.88	4.64	4.94	4.85	4.37

Note: Except where noted, responses are based on a six-item scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." As such, mean responses at 4.50 or above are generally considered to be positive.

* Questions are scored as "Yes," "No," "Do not know"; higher scores indicate more new teacher support.

** Items are reverse coded (e.g., Staff were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as *'Bullying is a problem at this school'* therefore, lower mean response indicates fewer staff concerns with bullying and student aggression).

Research-based strategies for supporting new teachers, such as mentorship programs and dedicated time for professional development, can have a positive impact on teacher retention.[20] While the scope of programs varies across the state, all school divisions in Virginia are required to implement a mentorship program for new teachers.[21] The 2021 survey administration asked classroom instructors in their first three years of teaching whether they received any of four different strategies to support new teachers (see Table 30).

Table 30. New Teacher Supports by School Level and Locale (n=9,804)

	Overall	School Level			Locale Type		
		Elementary	**Middle**	**High**	**City**	**Suburban**	**Town/Rural**
Formally assigned a mentor							
Yes	87.8	87.2	87.5	88.5	82.9	90.5	88.4
No	6.1	6.6	6.2	5.6	9.0	4.5	5.9
Do not know	6.1	6.2	6.3	5.8	8.1	5.0	5.7
Reduced Workload							
Yes	14.8	14.2	13.5	16.7	14.3	16.4	13.4
No	62.4	63.9	63.0	59.2	62.1	61.7	63.4
Do not know	22.8	22.0	23.5	24.1	23.5	21.9	23.2
Release time to observe other teachers							
Yes	33.3	36.2	32.3	30.0	29.7	35.4	33.6
No	43.2	41.8	44.3	45.0	46.1	40.4	44.6
Do not know	23.5	21.9	23.4	24.9	24.2	24.2	21.8
Formal time to meet with mentor							
Yes	49.3	47.9	50.6	49.7	46.5	50.9	49.5
No	36.0	37.3	35.0	34.9	36.5	34.9	37.0
Do not know	14.7	14.7	14.4	13.5	17.0	14.2	13.5

All items were only asked of classroom instructors in the first three years of teaching (*n=9,804*).

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[20] See, for example, https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/publications/how-high-achieving-countries-develop-great-teachers.pdf
[21] https://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/career_resources/mentor/index.shtml

Table 31. New Teacher Supports by Race or Ethnicity and Gender (n=9,804)

Measure	Overall	Race or Ethnicity								Gender		
		American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Nat. Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Other	Male	Female	Self-Describe
Formally assigned a mentor												
Yes	87.8	88.2	85.7	80.0	89.9	100.0	88.1	89.1	76.1	86.8	88.2	74.0
No	6.1	5.9	5.2	11.2	4.4	0.0	5.6	5.4	14.2	6.3	6.0	10.4
Do not know	6.1	5.9	9.1	8.8	5.6	0.0	6.3	5.5	9.7	6.9	5.8	15.6
Reduced workloads												
Yes	14.8	17.6	20.8	17.8	16.2	12.5	13.7	14.2	9.7	20.1	13.6	13.0
No	62.4	58.8	54.5	58.8	58.8	50.0	63.7	63.3	67.9	51.3	65.0	61.0
Do not know	22.8	23.5	24.7	23.5	25.0	37.5	22.6	22.4	22.4	28.6	21.4	26.0
Release time to observe other teachers												
Yes	33.3	35.3	34.2	32.5	33.1	62.5	34.2	33.4	26.1	37.6	32.4	24.7
No	43.2	41.2	36.8	45.3	39.3	12.5	43.0	43.3	52.2	36.4	44.8	44.2
Do not know	23.5	23.5	29.0	22.1	27.7	25.0	22.8	23.3	21.6	25.9	22.8	31.2
Formal time to meet with mentor												
Yes	49.3	47.1	56.3	50.9	49.5	87.5	48.8	49.1	37.3	57.7	47.5	36.4
No	36.0	29.4	27.3	31.8	32.5	12.5	36.0	36.9	49.3	27.6	37.8	45.5
Do not know	14.7	23.5	16.5	17.3	18.0	0.0	15.1	14.0	13.4	14.6	14.7	18.2

Table 32. Summary of Immediate Professional Plans Reported by Classroom Instructors (n=80,829)

Immediate Professional Plans	Overall
Continue teaching at my current school	83.6
Continue teaching in this division but leave this school	3.4
Continue teaching in this state but leave this division	2.7
Continue teaching in a state other than Virginia	1.2
Continue working in education but pursue a non-teaching position	3.2
Leave education to retire	2.1
Leave education to work in a non-education field	2.7
Leave education for other reasons	1.1

Summary of Survey Measures for Staff

The Staff Survey provides an opportunity for licensed, non-instructional staff and other non-licensed staff within the school building to provide feedback on working conditions. However, given the diversity of respondents' primary professional assignment (see Table 3), aggregate state-level results should be interpreted with caution. Localities are encouraged to use available school- and division-level reports to deduce areas of strength and opportunity within their respective buildings for supporting staff.

Table 33. Summary of Mean Response by Survey Measure, Overall and by School Level and Locale Type
(n=20,855)

Measure	Overall	School Level			Locale*		
		Elementary	Middle	High	City	Suburban	Town/ Rural
Staff Collegiality	4.96	5.03	4.92	4.83	4.91	4.98	4.97
Physical Environment	5.20	5.17	5.24	5.17	5.10	5.26	5.22
Student Engagement	4.91	5.12	4.74	4.65	4.85	4.94	4.91
Relationships among students	5.02	5.18	4.86	4.86	4.93	5.06	5.05
Relationships between students and adults	5.29	5.39	5.21	5.13	5.25	5.31	5.28
Professional Growth Opportunities	4.76	4.82	4.75	4.60	4.76	4.79	4.72
Managing Student Behavior	4.99	5.10	4.95	4.83	4.95	5.00	5.02
Parental Involvement	5.13	5.23	5.07	5.00	5.13	5.17	5.10
School Leadership	5.21	5.31	5.17	5.05	5.17	5.23	5.22
Safety	5.22	5.27	5.24	5.12	5.09	5.27	5.26
Bullying**	2.80	2.63	3.01	2.97	2.85	2.80	2.78
Student Aggression**	1.12	1.13	1.11	1.12	1.15	1.11	1.11
School Resource Officer (SRO)	5.02	4.88	5.05	5.10	4.90	5.02	5.10

Note: Except where noted, responses are based on a six-item scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." As such, mean responses at 4.50 or above are generally considered to be positive.
* Locale does not include schools identified as virtual or online.
** Items are reverse coded (e.g., Staff were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as '*Bullying is a problem at this school*' therefore, lower mean response indicates fewer staff concerns with bullying and student aggression).

Table 34. Summary of Mean Response by Survey Measure, Overall and by Staff Gender and Race/Ethnicity
(n=20,855)

Measure	Overall	Gender			Race/ Ethnicity							
		Male	Female	Self-Describe	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Asian	Black/ African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White	Other
Staff Collegiality	4.96	5.04	4.95	4.12	4.46	5.12	4.84	4.97	4.94	4.70	5.02	4.43
Physical Environment	5.20	5.30	5.19	4.54	4.79	5.29	5.12	5.22	5.11	5.01	5.25	4.81
Student Engagement	4.91	4.87	4.92	4.30	4.65	5.09	4.79	4.94	4.95	4.73	4.95	4.58
Relationships among Students	5.02	5.02	5.03	4.48	4.76	5.14	4.92	5.00	5.10	4.86	5.06	4.80
Relationships between Students and Adults	5.29	5.28	5.29	4.84	5.08	5.39	5.09	5.29	5.41	5.07	5.35	4.94
Professional Growth Opportunities	4.76	4.83	4.75	4.02	4.58	5.06	4.77	4.84	4.97	4.59	4.76	4.29
Managing Student Behavior	4.99	5.09	4.98	4.39	4.78	5.13	4.97	5.04	5.11	4.83	5.01	4.64
Parental Involvement	5.13	5.11	5.15	4.58	4.94	5.23	5.1	5.22	5.23	5.01	5.15	4.86
School Leadership	5.21	5.27	5.21	4.36	4.90	5.30	5.12	5.19	5.24	4.95	5.26	4.69
Safety	5.22	5.31	5.21	4.47	5.11	5.28	5.04	5.18	5.20	5.00	5.29	4.81
Bullying**	2.80	2.82	2.80	3.05	2.82	2.87	2.92	2.86	2.70	2.89	2.76	2.89
Student Aggression**	1.12	1.15	1.12	1.23	1.26	1.07	1.13	1.11	1.1	1.14	1.12	1.17
School Resource Officer (SRO)	5.02	5.21	4.99	4.44	4.88	5.07	4.99	5.06	5.37	4.88	5.04	4.80

* Locale does not include schools identified as virtual or online.

** Items are reverse coded (e.g., Staff were asked how often a series of aggressive events happened to them personally and how much they agreed or disagreed with statements such as *'Bullying is a problem at this school'* therefore, lower mean response indicates fewer staff concerns with bullying and student aggression).

Table 35. Summary of Immediate Professional Plans Reported by Staff (n=20,855)

Immediate Professional Plans	Overall
Continue working at my current school	88.9
Continue working in this division but leave this school	3.6
Continue working in education in this state but leave this division	1.8
Continue working in education but in a state other than Virginia	0.7
Leave education to retire	2.6
Leave education to work in a non-education field	1.6
Leave education for other reasons	0.9

Conclusions and Next Steps

Results from the 2021 administration of the Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions provide a point-in-time estimate of students', classroom instructors', and staff's perceptions of school climate and working conditions during a year hallmarked by significant educational disruptions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Positive statewide results speak to the resiliency of students and educators during this difficult year. More than 80 percent of students rated the atmosphere of their school as either positive or very positive and more than 90 percent of classroom instructors and staff believed their school was a good place to work and learn.

Important variation exists in these global climate and working conditions items measures across gender and race/ethnicity. These differences should be further explored. School building leaders are encouraged to work closely their divisions to disaggregate survey data and examine differences across groups to understand how climate and working conditions are perceived by all individuals within the school.

Across all survey measures, students, classroom instructors, and staff were most positive on survey items measuring the quality of relationships between students and adults. This is an encouraging indication of teachers' and staff's ability to connect with students even in the most challenging circumstances. For classroom instructors, professional growth opportunities and teaching leadership and autonomy received the lowest mean responses of all survey measures, whereas school connectedness received the lowest mean response for students. Overall, more than 80 percent of classroom instructors and nearly 90 percent of staff intend to continue working at their current school.

Survey results are intended to inform local conversations about climate and working conditions within schools. While state-level results convey how students, classroom instructors, and staff feel about their school, additional conversations about school-level data can identify why they feel as they do and what changes could be made. DCJS and VDOE encourage school administrators and division leaders to use local survey results to identify school improvement goals, such as increasing student engagement and strengthening professional growth opportunities for instructors and staff. Survey results can also be leveraged to document needs for school safety and student support programs.

The 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions improved upon prior administrations in numerous ways, key among those being combining the DCJS and VDOE survey efforts into a single survey. Moving forward, combining agency survey efforts necessitates a revision to the survey administration cycle so that schools administer the survey every other year. In even years (beginning in 2022), the Student, Classroom Instructor, and Staff Surveys will focus on grades 9–12. In odd years (beginning in 2023), the Student Survey will focus on grades 6–8 and the Classroom Instructor and Staff Surveys will be administered in schools serving Pre-Kindergarten through grade 8. Also beginning in 2022, all schools will be required to invite all students to complete the survey, instead of having the option to survey only a random sample. This change increases the likelihood that all student groups defined, for example, along race/ethnicity, language proficiency, and disability status, are sampled and represented in the data. Finally, DCJS and VDOE will continue to refine the school climate and working conditions measures included in the surveys Psychometric statistics were assessed at both the individual respondent level and the school level, found in Appendix F. This analysis will be utilized to inform revisions to the survey instrument.

TECHNICAL APPENDICES

Appendix A. Survey Development

The 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions was developed from the 2020 Virginia Secondary School Climate Survey administered by DCJS and the 2019 Virginia Working Conditions Survey administered by VDOE. Representatives of the two agencies collaborated with researchers at the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech to merge the two surveys. This work began in July 2020 with the surveys finalized in October 2020. The finalized survey was informed by the prior surveys' data and the psychometric properties, met the policy and programmatic priorities of both agencies, and reflected the current educational and social context.

DCJS and VDOE relied on prior survey administrations to estimate the time it would take respondents to complete the surveys (20 to 25 minutes for classroom instructors and staff; 20 to 30 minutes for students). The 2021 administration results confirmed these estimates. For the Classroom Instructors Survey, half of the respondents completed the survey in 17 minutes and three-quarters completed it in 26 minutes. For the Staff Survey, half of the respondents completed it in 15 minutes and three-quarters completed it in 23 minutes. Half of the student respondents completed the Student Survey in 17 minutes and three-quarters did so within 24 minutes.

Appendix B. Survey Instruments

Review copies of the surveys for classroom instructors, staff, and students are available on the VDOE website through the following links:

- 2021 VA School Survey: Classroom Instructors Version (Word)
- 2021 VA School Survey: Staff Version (Word)
- 2021 VA School Survey: Student Version (Word)

Appendix C. Communications to School Divisions

In September 2020, the DCJS and VDOE survey team began official communications efforts to school divisions about the 2021 survey administration. Strong messaging about the value of climate and working conditions surveys often improves response and participation rates. Formal communication efforts leveraged Superintendent's Memos and YouTube videos to publicize the survey and hosted webinars to educate survey administrators. The Superintendent's Memo 242-20, published on September 18, 2020, notified school divisions and school superintendents about the partnership between DCJS and VDOE to administer a single survey that addressed school climate. The Memo provided school divisions with survey requirements and instructions for selecting a single survey point of contact, a survey administration window, a student sampling approach, and any optional specialized schools for survey administration.

Education and school safety leaders in the Commonwealth announced publicly the 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions through a YouTube video hosted on the agency websites and social media accounts. This video features the Honorable Atif Qarni, Virginia Secretary of Education; the former Assistant Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security, Ms. Nikki Zamostny; State Superintendent of Education, Dr. James F. Lane; and Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Director, Ms. Shannon Dion. This message conveyed leadership support

for the survey at the highest levels of the Commonwealth and communicated the importance of the survey to schools, divisions, and Virginia.

DCJS and VDOE survey team members held two [Survey Administration Webinars](#) for school divisions to prepare for the effort just prior to the survey administration. These webinars reviewed specific instructions for school and division survey points of contact and provided an opportunity for these points of contact to get their questions and concerns addressed by the survey team. Specifically, the survey team reviewed survey instructional packets, to include information about how to use web links and passwords to administer the survey. They addressed instructions and questions around the whole school versus the random student sample survey approach and reviewed the response rate requirements and example data snapshot reports that schools and divisions would receive upon window closing. This effort provided local survey administrators with supporting instructions to their written packets.

Communications to Teachers and Staff. DCJS and VDOE provided a template for schools and divisions to inform their teachers and staff members about the survey. The template included information about the survey content, the anonymity of survey responses and instructions for accessing the survey, to include the survey link and school specific access code. Schools and divisions were instructed to place the text on their school's letterhead, send it to all licensed teachers as well as any other individuals holding a state professional license (e.g., a Collegiate Professional License, Postgraduate Professional License, or Pupil Personnel Services License) and to any non-licensed staff members they wished to participate in the survey. Schools and divisions were also encouraged to communicate the importance of collecting climate and working conditions data and the value of high response rates.

Communications to Parents and Guardians. DCJS and VDOE provided templates of informational letters in English and Spanish to participating schools in their instructional packets for use with all parents and guardians of students in grades 6–8. Schools were responsible for informing parents and guardians that their child would be asked to take the survey. Schools were also advised to place the template letter on their school's letterhead and distribute it to the parents and guardians of all eligible students. Schools were specifically instructed to inform parents and guardians that they may choose to opt their children out of the survey; that if parents chose to opt out, that they must notify their school; and that the school must specify the date for parents and guardians to decline to have their child participate. The template letter also included a link to a PDF of the student survey so that they could review the questions in advance of the survey administration.

The provided letter included key information for parents and guardians to weigh as they considered whether to opt their child out of participating in the survey. Specifically, they were informed that: the survey does not ask for their child's name and all answers are anonymous; parents and guardians would not have access to their child's survey answers; the survey is voluntary and their child can decide not to participate; and that no actions would be taken against their child, themselves, or their school should they opt out.

Follow-up Communications. The survey team conducted extensive follow up communication efforts with schools and divisions throughout their survey windows. A Superintendent's Email included a reminder to school division superintendents about the 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions. This email encouraged division leadership to continue their support of school principals in their efforts to administer the survey and to consider

demonstrating their leadership support through messaging that encouraged classroom instructors, staff, and students to participate.

For participating schools, their survey points of contact received emails indicating the beginning of their three-week survey window, marking the window's mid-point, and upon the survey close date. School and division points of contact were able to monitor their student and adult survey response rates in near real-time, using the DCJS survey dashboard.

Schools had the option of extending their survey windows to collect additional surveys if they did not meet their response rate threshold. This opportunity was offered to those schools whose response rates were below 50 percent of students in the eligible grades for schools participating in the whole sample category, below 25 students in the eligible grades for schools participating in the random sample category, or below 50 percent of classroom instructors in the school. The survey team sent emails to the survey points of contact following a window closure during the survey administration. This email included information about the response rate thresholds, links to the DCJS survey dashboard, and links to download school specific instructions and information. The point of contact could then choose to close the survey window, acknowledging that they would not automatically receive a school data snapshot for any surveys that did not meet the response rate threshold. Alternatively, they could choose to extend the survey window, select a new window close date and immediately begin collecting additional survey responses.

The survey team used phone calls and emails to notify the division points of contact when schools did not collect any surveys during their survey window. Division points of contact also received information about schools within their division that did not meet their response threshold. They were given an opportunity to close or extend the survey window in coordination with schools' points of contact. The team provided additional support and follow up to ensure schools and divisions had the information they needed to successfully execute the survey effort.

Appendix D. Spanish Language Student Survey

DCJS and VDOE provided Spanish language materials to all participating schools in support of the survey effort. The survey administration packet for schools included a Spanish language template letter for parents and guardians. Students also had the ability to complete the survey using a Spanish language version. Nearly all student respondents (*n*=101,844; 99.27 percent) completed the survey in English, with only 748 students or 0.73% percent choosing to complete the survey in Spanish.

Appendix E. State Survey Snapshots

Reports summarizing state-level results by item for classroom instructors, staff, and students are available on the VDOE website through the following links:

- 2021 Virginia School Survey Classroom Instructors State Results
- 2021 Virginia School Survey Staff State Results
- 2021 Virginia School Survey Students State Results

Appendix F. Reliability & Validity Statistics for 2021 Survey

The following tables include the reliability and validity statistics for each measure on the 2021 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions for Classroom Instructors (Table 1), Staff (Table 2), and Students in grades 6, 7, and 8 (Table 3). Psychometric statistics were assessed at both the individual respondent level and the school level. The school level properties are particularly important should school-level aggregate measures be used to compare schools or to predict other outcomes.

With regard to the statistics presented on the 2021 survey, the following statistical standards are applied:

- Reliability at the respondent level should be at or above 0.7.
- Reliability at the school level should be at or above 0.8.
- Validity at each level should be at or above 0.3.

Classroom Instructors Survey. All measures on the Classroom Instructors Survey are reliable and valid at both the respondent- and school-levels using the generally accepted statistical standards listed above with one exception. The composition of the Teacher Leadership & Autonomy measure differs between teachers and teacher's aides. Given the small number of teacher's aides at the average school (7), the school-level reliability analysis was restricted to schools with responses from at least 15 teacher's aides. The school-level reliability of this measure for teacher's aides is 0.67. These statistics are based on responses from 68,419 teachers and 12,416 teacher's aides at 1,916 schools for an average of 42 responses per school.

Staff Survey. All measures on the Staff Survey are reliable and valid at the staff level using the generally accepted statistical standards. These statistics are based on responses from 13,229 licensed staff and 7,627 non-licensed staff at 1,907 schools for an average of 11 responses per school. The small number of responses per school again presents a challenge to assessing the school-level properties of these. Just over half (51 percent) of the participating schools had at least than 10 respondents; only 23 percent had at least 15 respondents. The comparable statistics for classroom instructors are 3 and 93 percent. The results show three measures to be reliable at the school level (0.79–0.84); however, the remaining measures have a school-level reliability between 0.63 and 0.72.

Students in Grades 6, 7, and 8. All but one measure on the Student Survey are reliable and valid at both the student and school levels using the generally accepted rules of thumb. School Connectedness is the exception with a student-level reliability of 0.54, well below the 0.7 threshold. This measure only has three items, the minimum required for this type of analysis. Question 11 (*"If I am absent, there is a teacher or some other adult at school that will notice my absence"*) is problematic; its student-level factor loading is below the 0.3 threshold.

Table F-1. Reliability and Validity Statistics for 2021 Virginia School Survey for Classroom Instructors

Measure (# of items)	Level	Reliability [a]	Construct Validity [b]
Managing Student Behavior (13)	Respondent	0.94	0.68–0.89
	School	0.87	0.72–0.98
Parental Involvement (4)	Respondent	0.79	0.66–0.89
	School	0.84	0.78–0.94
Physical Environment (4)	Respondent	0.80	0.67–0.87
	School	0.87	0.70–0.98
Prevalence of Bullying (5)	Respondent	0.94	0.88–0.91
	School	0.91	0.95–0.99
Professional Growth Opportunities (5)	Respondent	0.94	0.84–0.94
	School	0.79	0.95–0.99
Relationships Among Students (4)	Respondent	0.92	0.77–0.95
	School	0.89	0.92–1.00
Relationships Between Students and Adults (5)	Respondent	0.91	0.82–0.94
	School	0.81	0.94–0.99
Rigorous Instruction (6)	Respondent	0.90	0.79–0.89
	School	0.78	0.88–0.99
Safety Concerns (4)	Respondent	0.82	0.76–0.87
	School	0.85	0.87–0.94
School Leadership (12)	Respondent	0.96	0.79–0.91
	School	0.87	0.89–0.98
Student Engagement (4)	Respondent	0.88	0.78–0.90
	School	0.93	0.93–0.99
Teacher Leadership & Autonomy: Teachers only (9)	Respondent	0.87	0.60–0.82
	School	0.83	0.70–0.94
Teacher Leadership & Autonomy: Teacher's Aides only (8)	Respondent	0.87	0.66–0.79
	School	0.67 [c]	0.78–0.94

[a] Respondent-level reliability is measured with Cronbach alpha. School-level reliability is measured by Spearman-Brown.
[b] Construct validity coefficients measured with standardized pattern loadings.
[c] This school-level reliability is estimated on a sample restricted to schools with responses from at least 15 teacher's aides (7.1% of the schools, 18.6% of teacher's aides). The average school has responses from only seven teacher's aides, which suppresses the school-level reliability among the full sample of teacher's aides (0.39).

Table F-2. Reliability and Validity Statistics for 2021 Virginia School Survey for Non-Instructional Staff

Measure (# of items)	Level	Reliability [a]	Construct Validity [b]
Managing Student Behavior (13)	Respondent	0.95	0.77–0.90
	School	0.71	0.81–0.97
Parental Involvement (4)	Respondent	0.82	0.70–0.91
	School	0.63	0.88–0.97
Physical Environment (4)	Respondent	0.84	0.70–0.95
	School	0.72	0.82–1.00
Prevalence of Bullying (5)	Respondent	0.95	0.88–0.93
	School	0.79	0.95–0.99
Professional Growth Opportunities (5)	Respondent	0.94	0.87–0.95
	School	0.57	0.97–0.99
Relationships Among Students (4)	Respondent	0.92	0.76–0.97
	School	0.79	0.96–0.99
Relationships Between Students and Adults (5)	Respondent	0.93	0.89–0.92
	School	0.69	0.92–0.99
Safety Concerns (4)	Respondent	0.83	0.82–0.89
	School	0.72	0.89–0.94
School Leadership (12)	Respondent	0.97	0.83–0.92
	School	0.70	0.91–0.99
Staff Collegiality (9)	Respondent	0.91	0.67–0.92
	School	0.68	0.81–1.00
Student Engagement (4)	Respondent	0.90	0.83–0.94
	School	0.84	0.95–0.98

[a] Respondent-level reliability is measured with Cronbach alpha. School-level reliability is measured by Spearman-Brown and is assessed on schools with at least 15 respondents (23% of schools, 45% of respondents).
[b] Construct validity coefficients measured with standardized pattern loadings.

Table F-3. Reliability and Validity Statistics for 2021 Virginia School Survey for Students in Grades 6, 7, and 8

Measure (# of items)	Level	Reliability [a]	Construct Validity [b]
Student Engagement (4)	Respondent	0.82	0.57–0.93
	School	0.91	0.53–0.99
School Connectedness (3)	Respondent	0.54	0.23–0.75
	School	0.86	0.54–1.00
Relationships Among Students (3)	Respondent	0.78	0.78–0.85
	School	0.93	0.97–0.99
Social-Emotional Learning (5)	Respondent	0.79	0.64–0.74
	School	0.92	0.79–1.00
Relationships Between Students and Adults (5)	Respondent	0.90	0.83–0.92
	School	0.85	0.95–0.99
Rigorous Instruction (6)	Respondent	0.83	0.70–0.84
	School	0.85	0.82–0.99
Managing Student Behavior (7)	Respondent	0.87	0.59–0.83
	School	0.88	0.63–0.97
General Safety (4)[c]	Respondent	0.99	0.85–0.90
	School	0.99	0.97–0.99
Prevalence of Bullying (5)[d]	Respondent	0.90	0.80–0.88
	School	0.96	0.94–0.98

[a] Respondent level reliability measured with Cronbach alpha; school level measured by Spearman-Brown.
[b] Construct validity coefficients measured with standardized pattern loadings.
[c] These survey questions were asked only of students who had attended school in-person.
[d] This measure does not include one item asked only of students who had attended school remotely ("Students at this school are bullied during online instruction").