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# The West Virginia School Climate Index

A Measure of School Engagement, Safety, and Environment

The WV School Climate Index provides (a) an overall measure of school climate that measures all domains and subdomains in the OSDFS model; (b) a straightforward, easily understood scale that can be readily interpreted by those working to improve school climate; and (c) information about component parts of the index to help schools rapidly identify areas for programmatic interventions.

## Report details the development of the West Virginia School Climate Index—a measure of school engagement, safety, and environment

The WV School Climate Index is a multidimensional measure developed by the WVDE Office of Research and Office of Healthy Schools as part of the Safe and Supportive Schools grant program (S3). The index was developed in alignment with a model put forth by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug Free Schools (OSDFS). The OSDFS based its model on a synthesis of available research and expert and stakeholder opinion, which point to school climate consisting of three primary domains, each consisting of corresponding subdomains (in italics) as follows:

- **Engagement** - the quality of *relationships*, including *respect for diversity*, among students, staff and families; the level of *school participation* and involvement by families, staff, and students in school activities; and efforts by schools to *connect* with the larger community.
- **Safety** - the *physical* and *emotional* security of the school setting and school-related activities as perceived, experienced, and created by students, staff, families, and the community. The *use and trade* of *illicit substances* in the school setting and during school-related activities also is included in this domain.
- **Environment** - the physical and mental health supports available that promote student *wellness*, the *physical* condition of school facilities, the *academic environment*, and the *disciplinary* tone of the school—i.e., the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures.

The WV School Climate Index—derived from 20 indicators drawing from student and staff survey data and selected discipline incident data reported in the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS)—provides (a) an overall measure of school climate that measures all domains and subdomains in the OSDFS model; (b) a straightforward, easily understood scale that can be readily interpreted by those working to improve school climate; and (c) information about component parts of the index to help schools rapidly identify areas for programmatic interventions. The measure is a requirement of the S3 program, which awarded WVDE a grant in 2010.

To date, the WV School Climate Index has been deployed in 42 high schools in 18 counties that are part of West Virginia's S3 grant program. This Office of Research publication fulfills West Virginia's obligation to publicly document the composition of the index.

For more information about the WV School Climate Index, contact Dr. Andy Whisman, Coordinator, Office of Research ([swhisman@access.k12.wv.us](mailto:swhisman@access.k12.wv.us)), or download the full report, *The West Virginia School Climate Index: A Measure of School Engagement, Safety, and Environment*, available at the following URL: <http://wvde.state.wv.us/research/reports2012.html>.