

As part of the Measuring Opportunity Pilot Project (MOPP), a taskforce was put together to select a survey, or set of surveys, that measured social and emotional competencies and aspects of school climate critical to alternative schools. This report summarizes the responses from 10 pilot schools for the fall 2021 administration of the survey.

The Colorado AEC SEL & School Climate Survey

Fall 2021 Pilot Report
Momentum Strategy & Research

Introduction

In the spring of 2021, four schools who were participating in the Measuring Opportunity Pilot Project (MOPP) and Momentum Strategy & Research (the MOPP project accountability partner) formed a taskforce to select a survey, or group of surveys, to measure social and emotional competencies and aspects of school climate that alternative education campuses (or AECs) find critical to their work with students. As a Colorado Department of Education’s Local Accountability Grant program-funded initiative, the purpose of MOPP is to pilot innovative accountability measures to inform Colorado accountability moving forward. As such, the AEL SEL & School Climate Survey, developed through the MOPP taskforce, is being piloted throughout the 2021-2022 school year to inform its use in AEC accountability in the near future.

The AEC SEL & School Climate Survey (SEL survey) is a combination of the Washoe County School District’s Social and Emotional Competency Assessment and three Panorama scales on school climate, safety, and academic rigor. The Washoe Social and Emotional Competency Assessment includes 40 items covering all five CASEL Pillars: self-awareness, social-awareness, relationship skills, self-management, and responsible decision making. In addition, the Washoe survey separates out self-awareness into two components and self-management into three components. The self-awareness scales assess both self-concept and emotion knowledge. The self-management scales cover goal management, management of schoolwork, and emotion regulation. The Washoe survey was selected by the MOPP taskforce for its length, relevant content, clarity, and simplicity of language.

The pilot is not only assessing the average responses for alternative schools but is also testing the use of the SEL survey as a growth measure, with schools administering the survey at least twice during the school year. As school climate is not typically seen, or used, as a growth measure, several the pilot schools will only be administering the three school climate scales in the spring of 2022. Thus, this report covers only the response outcomes for the SEL survey collected in the fall of 2021.

Pilot Sample

In the fall of 2021, ten AECs assessed their students using the SEL survey, and a total of 962 students completed the survey. The participating schools ranged in size from 50-1500 students (average of 263), and all 10 schools enroll students in grades 9-12 only. Six out of the 10 participating AECs are charter schools, and the others are either run by school districts or BOCES.

Schools administered the survey between the last week in September and the first week of November 2021. The average participation rate for the ten schools was 55%, with a range of 5-80%. Only three of the 10 schools’ participation rates were below 50 percent¹. As demographic data were not collected as part of the survey, we cannot speak to how representative the respondents are of the total population.

Summary of Survey Data

Each table in this section summarizes both the item and scale score level statistics for each SEL Scale, individually. For each item, we provide the percentage of students who responded that the item is either “Easy” or “Very easy” for them (also referred to as the percent positive responses). The average percent positive is provided based on the average percent of students responding “Easy” or “Very easy” to each item in the scale. The average scales score and the scale score values for students in the 25th, 50th, and 75th percentile² of responders are then provided. For all items across all scales the scoring is as follows:

- Very difficult= 1
- Difficult= 2

¹ The industry average for public survey administration is at or around 50 percent.

² Percentiles are interpreted as the percentage of students scoring at or better than the identified value. Students scoring at the 50th percentile values, for example, are interpreted as scoring at the same or higher level than 50 percent of the students in the sample.

- Easy= 3
- Very easy= 4.

Thus, students with higher scores represent students who are said to be more competent in the area being assessed than those with lower scores. Schools can use these data summaries to a) identify students who are struggling in one or more areas—for example, students scoring at or below the 25th percentile on a scale—and b) see growth over time when comparing these fall results to subsequent results later in the year.

We end the report with a summary of how each pilot school’s scale scores compared to the sample average. School names, however, are not included to preserve the schools’ anonymity.

Table 1. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Self-Awareness: Self-Concept Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Knowing what my strengths are	74.6%
Knowing how to get better at things that are hard for me to do at school	60.4%
Knowing when I am wrong about something	79.6%
Knowing when I can't control something	71.6%
<i>Average percent positive</i>	71.5%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	11.43
Score @ the 25th percentile	10.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	12.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	13.00

Table 2. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Self-Awareness: Emotion Knowledge Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Knowing when my feelings are making it hard for me to focus	71.2%
Knowing the emotions I feel	68.6%
Knowing ways to make myself feel better when I'm sad	59.6%
Noticing what my body does when I am nervous	78.7%
Knowing when my mood affects how I treat others	75.3%
Knowing ways I calm myself down	66.3%
<i>Average percent positive</i>	70.0%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	17.06

Score @ the 25th percentile	15.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	17.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	19.00

Table 3. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Social Awareness Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Learning from people with different opinions than me	80.8%
Knowing what people may be feeling by the look on their face	76.9%
Knowing when someone needs help	74.6%
Knowing how to get help when I'm having trouble with a classmate	72.7%
Knowing how my actions impact my classmates	82.0%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	77.4%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	14.65
Score @ the 25th percentile	13.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	15.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	16.00

Table 4. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Self-Management: Emotion Regulation Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Getting through something even when I feel frustrated	51.5%
Being patient even when I am really excited	70.3%
Staying calm when I feel stressed	51.1%
Working on things even when I don't like them	52.7%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	56.4%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	10.35
Score @ the 25th percentile	9.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	10.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	12.00

Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Finishing tasks even if they are hard for me	55.1%
Setting goals for myself	67.0%
Reaching goals that I set for myself	50.1%
Thinking through the steps it will take to reach my goals	62.7%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	58.7%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	10.50
Score @ the 25th percentile	9.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	11.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	12.00

Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Doing my schoolwork even when I do not feel like it	51.0%
Being prepared for tests	54.9%
Working on assignments even when they are hard	56.5%
Planning ahead so I can turn a project in on time	51.2%
Finishing my schoolwork without reminders	56.4%
Staying focused in class even when there are distractions	53.5%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	53.9%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	15.25
Score @ the 25th percentile	13
Score @ the 50th percentile	15
Score @ the 75th percentile	18

Table 7. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Relationship Skills Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Respecting a classmate's opinions during a disagreement	86.3%
Getting along with my classmates	85.6%
Sharing what I am feeling with others	38.1%
Talking to an adult when I have problems at school	55.4%
Being welcoming to someone I don't usually eat lunch with	75.9%
Getting along with my teachers	90.5%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	72.0%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	16.99
Score @ the 25th percentile	15.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	17.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	18.00

Table 8. Item and Scale Score Descriptive Statistics for the Responsible Decision-Making Scale	
Item Descriptives	
Item	% Easy or Very Easy
Thinking about what might happen before making a decision	70.0%
Knowing what is right or wrong	88.5%
Thinking of different ways to solve a problem	78.6%
Saying 'no' to a friend who wants to break the rules	79.5%
Helping to make my school a better place	80.8%
<i>Average Percent Positive</i>	79.5%
Scale Score Descriptives	
Average Scale Score	14.88
Score @ the 25th percentile	14.00
Score @ the 50th percentile	15.00
Score @ the 75th percentile	16.00

School Level Averages

For a measure to potentially be used for accountability purposes, it should be able to detect some amount of variation between schools' outcomes. The figure below summarizes how far each (unidentified) school's average scale scores differed from the sample average. Bars above the mid-line (or zero line) represent scale scores higher than the sample average. Bars below the mid-line represent scale scores below the average. Data in Figure 1 does show differences across schools' average scale scores, in a variety of ranges.

Figure 1. Fall 2021 Pilot Schools' Average Scale Scores in Relation to the Average Scale Scores for the Entire Sample of Students (0 line).

