



Cognia Alternate Survey Report: Climate-Culture Surveys for Students, Teachers, & Parents

Serving as Alternate Survey Partner with the
Illinois State Board of Education

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**Dr. Lori Franke-Hopkins
State Director, Cognia**

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Summary of Cognia eProve™

Cognia has developed a suite of tools within the online eProve™ software platform to measure important aspects of teaching and learning. These tools rely on various measurement approaches, from typical Likert-type items where the respondent rates the level of agreement with the item stem, to behaviorally focused items that ask how often a teacher or student engages in some specific behavior.

eProve™ includes over fifty surveys that allow students to understand the voice of stakeholders and implement improvement processes based on their feedback. **The Climate and Culture Survey** is structured so that respondents are asked to choose four words or phrases that best reflect their experiences with their (or their children's) school. The results are based on the percentage of respondents who chose a particular word or phrase in relation to the question stem. Following the work of Ritchhart (2015), the *School Climate and Culture Survey* looks to get information across eight different "forces" that shape school culture: Expectations, Language, Time, Modeling, Opportunities, Routines, Interactions, and Environment. These surveys are available in English and Spanish and schools/districts can distribute surveys digitally or provide printed copies (Appendix A).

Illinois 5Essentials/Cognia's Climate-Culture Survey

Crosswalk

Senate Bill 7 requires the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to establish a survey of learning conditions to provide feedback from teachers and students regarding the instructional environment within each school in the state. Every school district must administer the survey in each of its schools at least biannually and provide the data to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). ISBE, in partnership with the University of Chicago, provides the 5Essentials Survey for Illinois districts and schools annually to leverage stakeholder voice. Based on research conducted by the University of Chicago, the following were found to be critical for success: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment, Ambitious Instruction.

Understanding that ISBE needs to ensure alignment and coherence of data and information collected and reported as part of the state's accountability system, a



comprehensive crosswalk of the 5Essentials framework and Cognia's Climate/Culture Surveys is included (Appendix B).

Research Base, Scale Reliability, Documented Testing

One of the most important aspects of any well-functioning education system is understanding its norms, how the members of that system interact to successfully to meet its overall goals (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). While no one measure can truly capture the “culture” or a school or school system, we can look at important aspects of that system from many different angles and from the viewpoints of different stakeholders (Appendix C).

Following the work of Ritchhart (2015), the Cognia School Climate and Culture survey looks to get information across 8 different “forces” that shape school culture:

- Expectations – what are the expectations for students in a school?
- Language – what words do teachers use to shape what activities, thinking, and ideas are seen as being important?
- Time – how do those in a school feel about the time they have to do what they are asked to do to be successful?
- Modeling – what kinds of behaviors do adults in the school exhibit that can reinforce an effective learning culture?
- Opportunities – what opportunities do students have in the classroom to apply their skills and knowledge?
- Routines – what kinds of thinking and learning routines happen in the classroom and are they experiences as being a normal part of the everyday classroom culture?
- Interactions – what kinds of interactions do students have with adults in the school, do teachers have with peers, do parents have with staff, etc.?
- Environment – what is the experience of the physical spaces in which learning, teaching, and working happen?

The Cognia School Climate and Culture Survey is structured so that respondents are asked to choose 4 words or phrases that best matched their experiences with their (or their



children’s) school. This survey attempts to measure the overall culture of the school across the eight areas mentioned above from the perspective of students, teachers, staff, and parents.

The Climate and Culture Survey has forms for students, parents, non-academic staff, and teachers. The questions are similar across all forms, although not all groups receive all of the questions based on respondents’ age and/or if that respondent group has enough information to be able to accurately answer the question as it was posed. In addition, a question related to how students, teachers, and staff “feel” while at school is administered. The results are based on the percentage of respondents who chose a particular word or phrase in relation to the question stem.

Data collected across the Cognia network between 2015 and 2018 was used calculate Cronbach’s Alpha, a common statistical method employed to demonstrate evidence for the reliability of an instrument such as the Climate and Culture survey. The results of this analysis are presented below and represent a range and depth of respondents across the Elementary, Middle & High School, Parent, Staff, and Teacher forms.

	Elementary	Middle & High School	Parent	Staff	Teacher
Statistic					
Reliability	0.42	0.85	0.73	0.84	0.83
N	238,665	597,856	266,277	40,020	89,082
Gender (%)					
Male	49.7	49.1	25.3	18.5	22.8
Female	49.8	50.7	74.1	80.9	76.6
Race (%)					
American Indian or Alaska Native	4.6	2.8	1.8	1.9	1.0
Asian	2.2	3.4	2.6	1.3	1.4
Black or African American	22.1	17.2	14.7	15.3	10.1
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Isla.	0.9	1.0	0.5	0.4	0.2
Two or more races	14.8	16.0	7.5	4.2	3.8
White	52.6	56.2	70.4	74.6	81.7
Ethnicity (%)					
Hispanic	16.9	23.0	14.9	8.9	NA
Not Hispanic or Latino	80.7	70.9	78.2	80.1	NA

References

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., & Easton, J. Q. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Ritchhart, R. (2015). *Creating Cultures of Thinking*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



Appendices

[Appendix A: Climate-Culture Surveys: Students, Teachers, Parents](#)

[Appendix B: 5Essentials Crosswalk-Cognia Climate-Culture Surveys](#)

Appendix C: Impact of Cognia's Continuous Improvement Process: White Paper, Case Studies, Research Briefs

- [Effective Learning Environment Observation Tool White Paper](#)
- [Case Study: A District in Rural Kentucky Moves from Turnaround to Transformation](#)
- [Case Study: A Suburban District Innovates and Improves to Avoid State Intervention](#)
- [Case Study: Improving Student Learning through Formative Assessment](#)
- [Research Brief: Impact of Diagnostic Reviews on Improvement](#)
- [Research Brief: Student Engagement Survey 2.0 Pilot](#)

