

Survey of Learning Conditions Summary of Alternative Selection Process

Background

On June 13, 2014, HB 5546 became Public Act 98-0648.

Public Act 98-0647 amends the School Code. It provides that each school district shall administer, at least biennially (rather than biannually), the survey of learning conditions instrument in every public school attendance center by a date specified by the State Superintendent of Education, and data resulting from the instrument's administration must be provided to the State Board of Education. It provides that a school district may elect to use, on a district-wide basis and at the school district's sole cost and expense, an alternate survey of learning conditions instrument pre-approved by the State Superintendent, and sets forth provisions regarding how to use an alternate survey instrument. It provides for an approval process by the State Superintendent for two to three alternate survey instruments. It provides that the requirement that a report card include indicators of the school environment also include 2 or more indicators from any school climate survey selected or approved (rather than developed) by the State and administered under the Code, with the same or similar indicators included on school report cards for all surveys selected or approved by the State under Code. This legislation is effective July 1, 2014.

A full copy of the *enrolled* version of this legislation is available at the following URL:
<http://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/98/PDF/098-0648.pdf>.

Alternative Survey Selection Process

The following is an outline of the steps taken to meet the mandates of the new legislation, the efforts made to integrate key stakeholder groups into the process, and the process utilized to reach a final selection of three alternative measures of learning conditions.

- In July, stakeholders (teachers, principals and district superintendents) were invited to participate in one of three project work groups – the “Research Team”, the “Rubric Team”, and the “Rating Team” – by the IEA, IFT, IPA, and IASA. Each work group consisted of an even ratio of teachers to administrators.
- Also in July, a SurveyMonkey poll was created to solicit survey instrument suggestions from interested stakeholders and the general public. The survey was advertised in Dr. Koch’s weekly newsletter, and closed on July 25th.
- The Research Team convened on July 22nd. They were instructed to research survey instruments suggested to ISBE via the SurveyMonkey poll, as well as additional instruments known to be widely used in measuring school climate.
 - Surveys that did **not** meet the minimum requirements of Public Act 98-0648 were eliminated from the suggestion pool.

- Information folders on surveys that **did** meet minimum requirements were compiled and stored on a shared Dropbox site – this site was made accessible to the Rating Team to aide in the survey rating process.
- A rubric document, intended to objectively grade those surveys deemed to be viable candidates, was drafted in July. This draft was presented to the Rubric Team on July 28th, at an all-day workshop meeting in Bloomington. The Rubric Team proffered their feedback and suggestions, ensuring that the final rubric would be grading those survey aspects most important to stakeholders.
 - The rubric was developed with the understanding that only surveys meeting the minimum requirements of Public Act 98-0648 would be graded. The rubric thus addressed additional paradigms of quality not iterated in the Act itself.
 - The rubric ultimately consisted of five dimensions (one of which was optional, based on prior experience with the instrument and not factored into the final score), which consisted of anywhere from 3 to 10 items, scored on either a 5-point (1-5) or binary (0/1) scale, with items pertaining to reliability and validity double-weighted. The maximum possible score from the rubric was 100 points.
- After extensive research and information gathering by the Research Team, a list of surveys that meet the requirements of Public Act 98-0648 was finalized on August 20th. The final list was as follows:

SURVEY TITLE:	SUGGESTED BY:
AdvancEd Standards for Quality	Sandwich 430, Leyden 212, Carlinville 1
California School Climate Survey	ISBE
Comprehensive School Climate Inventory	Carbondale 95
Culture of Excellence and Ethics Assessment	Maercker 60

Some districts and organizations suggested two surveys to be used in conjunction – typically because one survey measured student opinions, while the other measured teacher opinions. In the interest of equal treatment, these paired suggestions were considered in all possible combinations of student and teacher survey. Those surveys that met the minimum requirements when paired with a complimentary survey were included in the final list, as follows:

SURVEY TITLE:	STUDENT/TEACHER:	SUGGESTED BY:
Illinois TeLL	Teacher	IFT
Gallup Student Poll	Student	IFT, U-46
Organizational Health Instrument	Teacher	Marquardt 15, CCSD 93
Harris SchoolPulse	Student	CCSD 93

Finally, there were those surveys that were not found to meet the minimum requirements of Public Act 98-0648, for various reasons. All of the following surveys were confirmed to not meet the requirements by members of the Research Team:

SURVEY TITLE:	REQUIREMENT NOT MET:
Joyce Epstein Parent Survey	Gathers feedback from students and teachers
Center for the Study of School Climate	Provides summary reports for districts and schools
The 2013 National School Climate Survey	Gathers feedback from students and teachers
Washington State Effective Schools Research / Perception surveys	Meets reliability and validity standards
InsightEx	Gathers feedback from students and teachers
Illinois Youth Survey	Gathers feedback from students and teachers
School Perceptions	Provides research-based evidence linking survey content to improved student outcomes
District-created SurveyMonkey Poll	Meets reliability and validity standards

- The Rating Team kicked off the final stage of the process on August 29th. They were given access to the information folders compiled by the Research Team, as well as blank copies of the survey rubric that was workshopped and finalized by the Rubric team. The 21 members of the Rating Team were assigned to read about three surveys each and complete rubrics on these surveys accordingly. This allowed for each survey or survey pair to be read by at least 6 stakeholders, evenly distributed between administrators (principals, superintendents) and teachers. Information provided to the Rating Team to help inform their ratings may be found here: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/pz64u5jv85ha6wn/AACR_w2oYxb9a-0wXUDfOtxSa?dl=0
- The rating period officially closed on September 26th. Of the original 21 stakeholders who volunteered to be on the rating team, 15 completed their rubrics before the deadline. Each survey was rated a minimum of four times, with an equal number being rated four or five times. Total scores for each section and overall scores were pulled together and averaged across all raters for that survey, to comprise an average overall score out of a maximum 100 points for each survey. The final average overall scores for each rated survey are as follows:

SURVEY TITLE:	FINAL SCORE (OUT OF 100):	NUMBER OF TIMES SCORED:
CSCI	75.4	5
Gallup+OHI	75.0	5
Harris+OHI	72.2	5
California	70.0	4
AdvancEd	65.2	5
CEEA	63.3	4
Gallup+TeLL	58.8	4
Harris+TeLL	47.0	4

- A participant feedback survey was administered at the beginning of the rating period, and closed on September 25th. The respondents were asked a series of questions about the nature of their participation in the survey selection process, and their positive and negative impressions about said process. Feedback, though relatively minimal, trended positive. Some choice prompts and responses are below:

What aspects of the alternative survey of learning conditions selection process were most important or significant to you? When we undergo this process in the future, which aspects would you like to see repeated?

- “All aspects were important to the selection process. If we do this again, the volunteers should be brought together to work on the process.”
- “The idea of involving all of the stakeholders is critical and is one we ought to retain in the future. The idea of developing a rubric against which to assess the alternative survey instruments is excellent and should be retained.”

Which aspects of the selection process could be improved upon? Are there any steps or components we should add to or disclude from the process in future?

- “More time is needed to thoroughly investigate and research the surveys. It's difficult to commit as much time as necessary over the summer.”
- “It would be helpful to have a collective meeting to review each step of the process and to go over all the documents that will be used in the evaluation process. People could ask questions and provide feedback. It would also be helpful to have consistent documentation for each vendor as much as is possible.”

What are your thoughts on the alternative survey of learning conditions selection process overall?

- “Since the results ultimately have to be used in the IL report card adding alternatives is, at best, a cumbersome process. I remain unconvinced that we need more than the 5Essentials.”
- “I think having other instruments provides for more individual customization.”

Ultimately, the process of selecting alternative surveys of learning conditions maximized stakeholder participation to achieve as much transparency and incorporation of opinions as possible, given the strict timeframe.

Alternatives Selected

The State Board of Education has selected the top two recommendations from the group of teachers, principals and superintendents who participated in the rating of survey of learning conditions alternatives.

Alternative 1: Comprehensive School Climate Inventory
Alternative 2: Organizational Health Instrument Teacher Survey and Gallup Student Survey

In addition, the Superintendent has selected the **AdvanceEd instrument** as a third alternative because this survey is used in the accreditation process in which many school districts already participate. Further, this accreditation is required by ISBE in certain circumstances.