

# Promoting Healthy and Positive School Climates

2018-19 Pilot

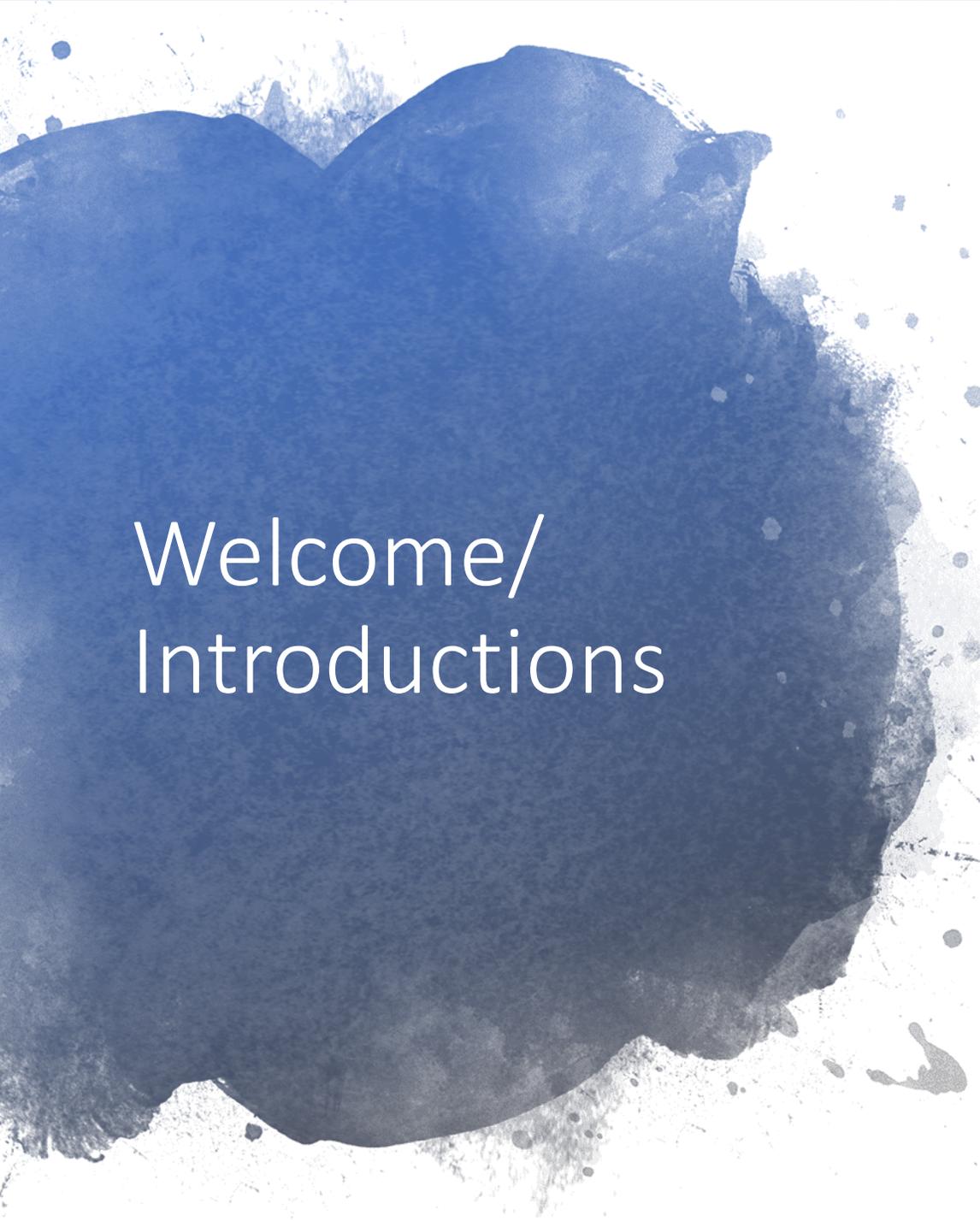
NYS Education Department

Kickoff Meeting

December 13, 2018

3:00pm

- Date/Time:  
Thursday, December 13, 2018, 3:00pm
- URL:
  - <https://meetnydirect.webex.com/meet/michele.shahen>
  - Meeting number: 804 331 037
- Audio:
  - US Toll Free: 1-844-633-8697
  - Access code: 804 331 037



# Welcome/ Introductions

- Renée Rider, Associate Commissioner, Office of School Operations and Management Services, NYSED
- Kathleen DeCataldo, Assistant Commissioner, Office of Student Support Services, NYSED
- Michele Shahan, Coordinator of School Climate Initiatives, Office of Student Support Services, NYSED

# Agenda

1. Background
2. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
3. School Climate Index (SCI)
4. US Department of Education School Climate Surveys
5. Promoting Healthy and Positive School Climates  
NYS Education Department  
2017-18 Pilot
6. Survey Outcomes
7. Next Steps
8. Resources

# Background

# Vision:

## Safe Schools Task Force Re-established in 2013

***Jan. 2013:** Board of Regents directed SED to re-establish the NYS Safe Schools Task Force after the Newtown, CT tragedy, to advise on ways to improve school safety in NYS*

***Co-chairs:** Vice Chancellor of the Board of Regents and Commissioner of the NYS Education Department*

***Task Force Members:** School district officials; school personnel; parents; education advocates and union representatives; community health, mental health, social services and law enforcement personnel; Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services; Division of State Police; Division of Criminal Justice Services and SED staff*

# NYS Safe Schools Task Force Vision

*“School environments in New York State will effectively promote and protect the well-being of ALL students and personnel each day and into the future.”*

# Two Themes Evident Throughout the NYS Safe Schools Task Force

## 36 Recommendations\* to Improve School Safety

- 1. **Promote and measure school climate** rather than focus exclusively on measuring school violence, and*
- 2. **Focus on Social Emotional Learning** to help students learn the essential skills that affect every area of our lives, including how to understand and manage emotions, and how to establish and maintain positive relationships.*

\* <http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/914p12d6.pdf>

# What is School Climate?

*School climate is –*

*“the way school culture affects a child’s sense of safety and acceptance, and consequently is a critical determinant of their ability to focus on the task of learning”.*

# Why Measure School Climate?

*Research suggests that:*

*The **quality of the school climate** may be the **single most predictive factor in any school's capacity to promote student achievement**;*

*If we want achievement gains, we need to begin by improving the school climate.*



# Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

# New York State's Adopted ESSA Plan

*“It is a priority of the Board of Regents that New York State schools **foster a culture and climate that makes school a safe haven where every student feels welcome and free from bias; harassment; discrimination; and bullying, especially for traditionally marginalized youth, including, but not limited to youth of color; LGBTQ youth; and youth with disabilities.**”*

# New York State's Adopted ESSA Plan

“...the Department will support districts in **creating conditions that maximize all students' learning**, especially for traditionally marginalized youth...through activities, policies, and strategies that reduce bullying, harassment, and the overuse of punitive and exclusionary responses to student misbehavior...will also **promote** the understanding of diverse cultural characteristics, positive disciplinary practices, **improving school climate, and providing students with social-emotional support**. The Department continues to develop and build upon existing guidance and resources to combat harassment, bullying, and discrimination, and to **enhance efforts to build and maintain positive and healthy school climates**. Efforts will be expanded to provide capacity-building guidance; strategies; best-practice resources; and professional development for school administrators, instructional staff, and non-instructional staff in the following areas to advance these initiatives:

**..Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)**

**..Social-Emotional Wellness and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)**

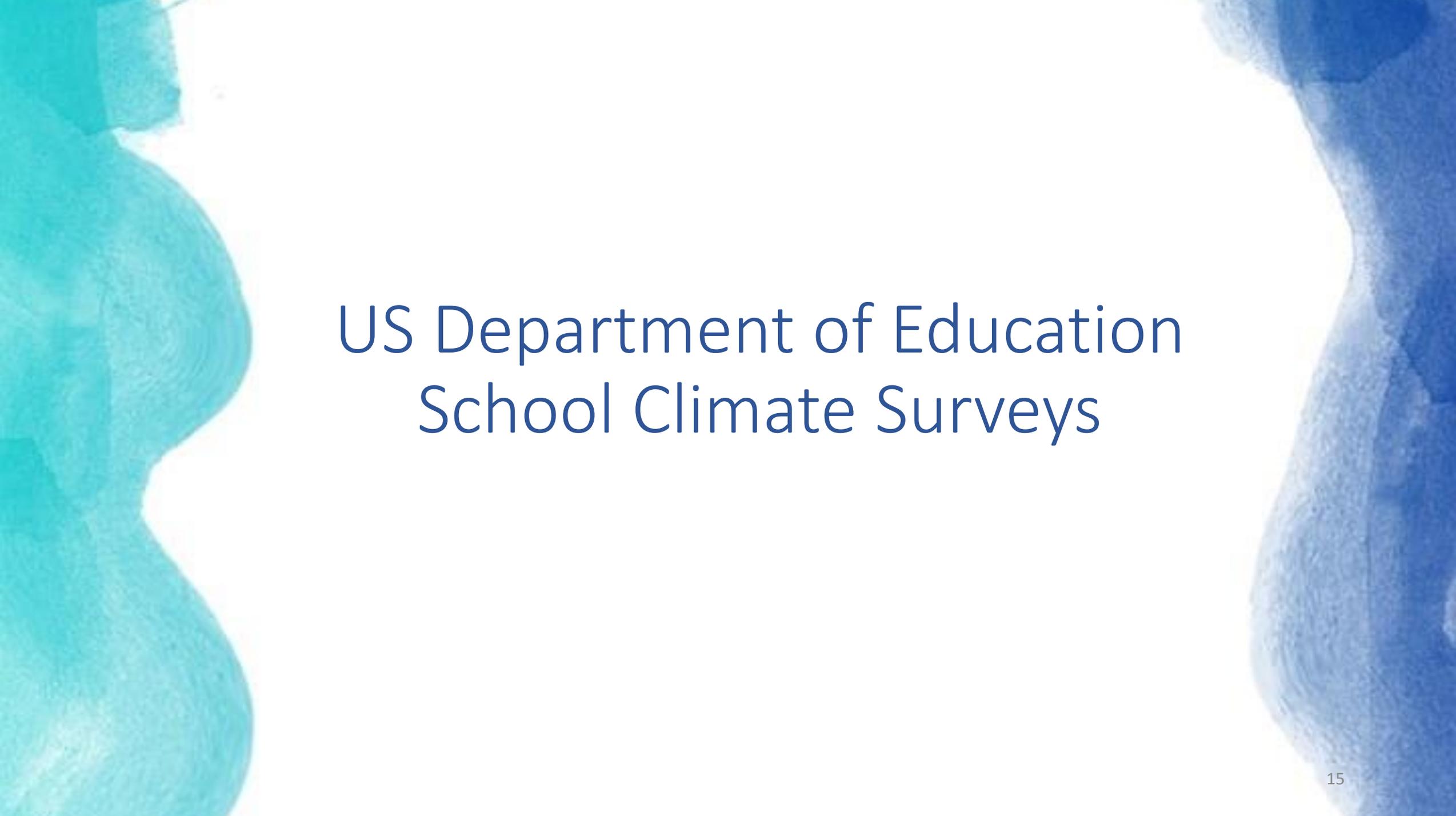
**..Reduce Exclusionary Discipline and Implement Restorative Practices**

**..Measure School Climate by Using School Climate Surveys “**

# School Climate Index (SCI)

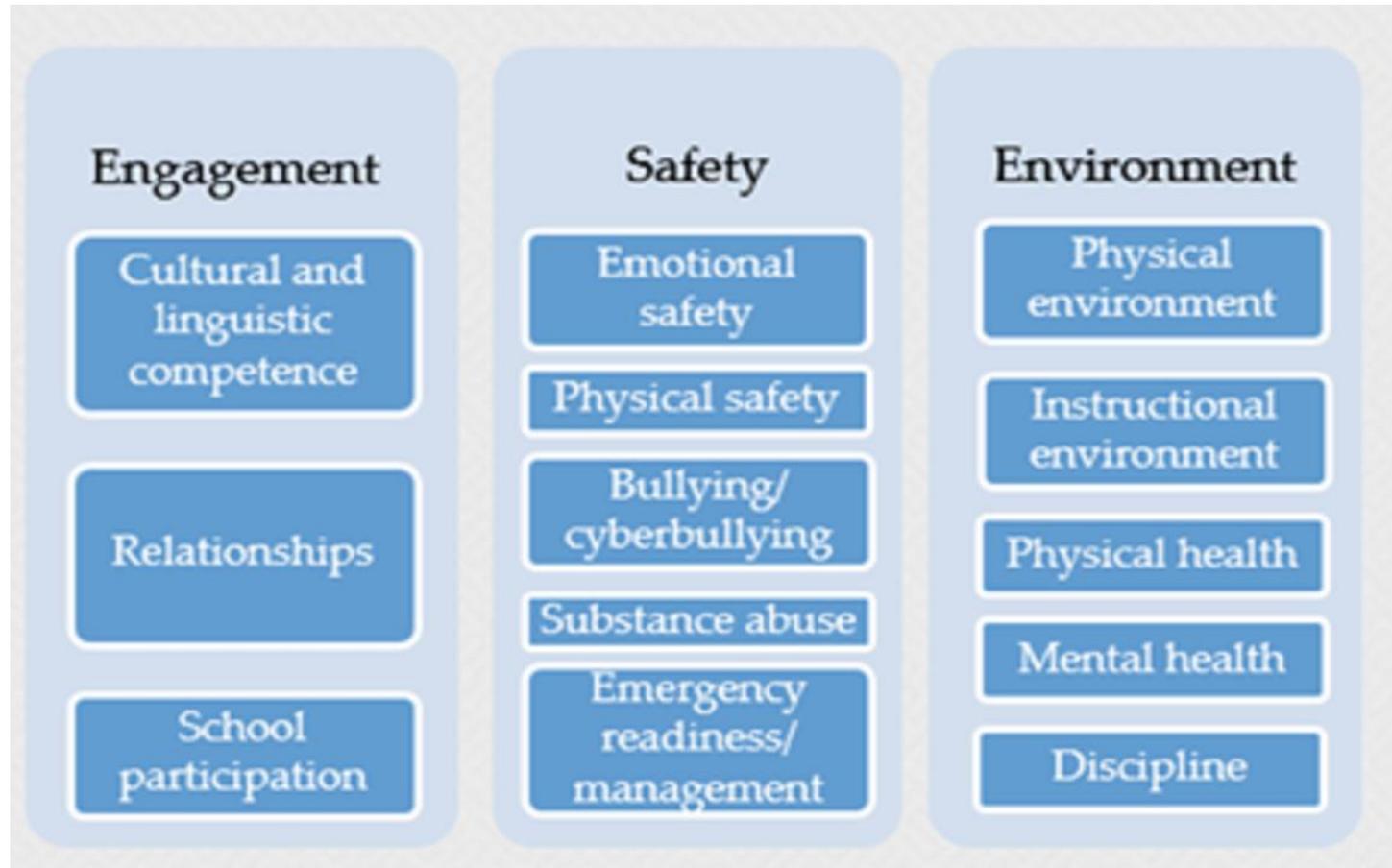
# New York State's School Climate Index (SCI)

1. **School Climate Surveys:** implement evidenced-based, valid and reliable surveys to:
  - Students
  - Parents/Guardians
  - School Personnel
2. **School Violence Index:** Based on revised VADIR/DASA categories
3. **Chronic Absenteeism** – Calculate percentage of students who miss 10% or more of instructional days.



# US Department of Education School Climate Surveys

# US Department of Education (USDE) School Climate Surveys



# US Department of Education (USDE) Sample Questions Student School Climate Survey

9. Adults at this school treat all students respectfully.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. People of different cultural backgrounds, races, or ethnicities get along well at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

# US Department of Education (USDE) Sample Questions Parent School Climate Survey

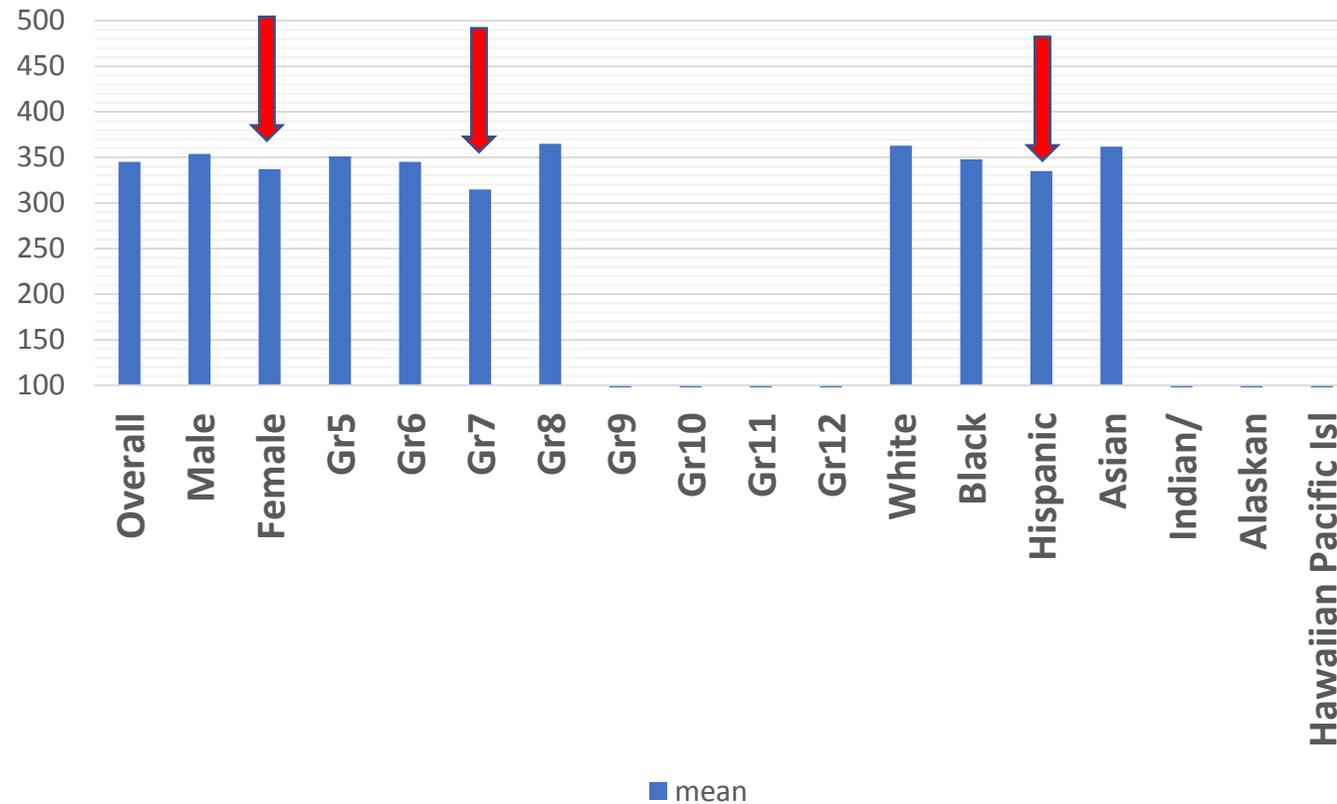
18. My child is safe at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

19. Racial/ethnic conflict among students is a problem at this school.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

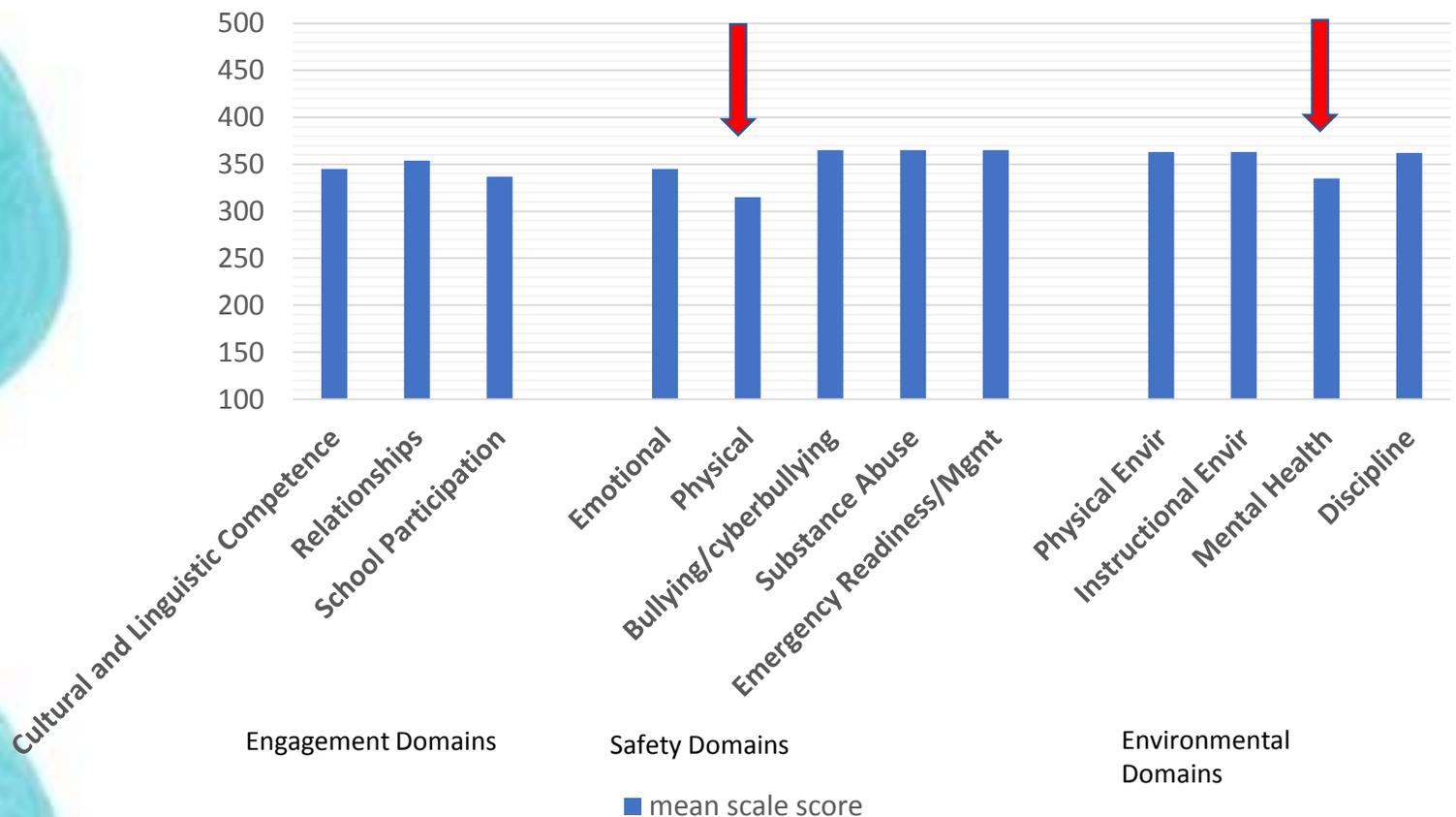
# Student Survey Results from a Buffalo Middle School Environment/Mental Health Subdomain



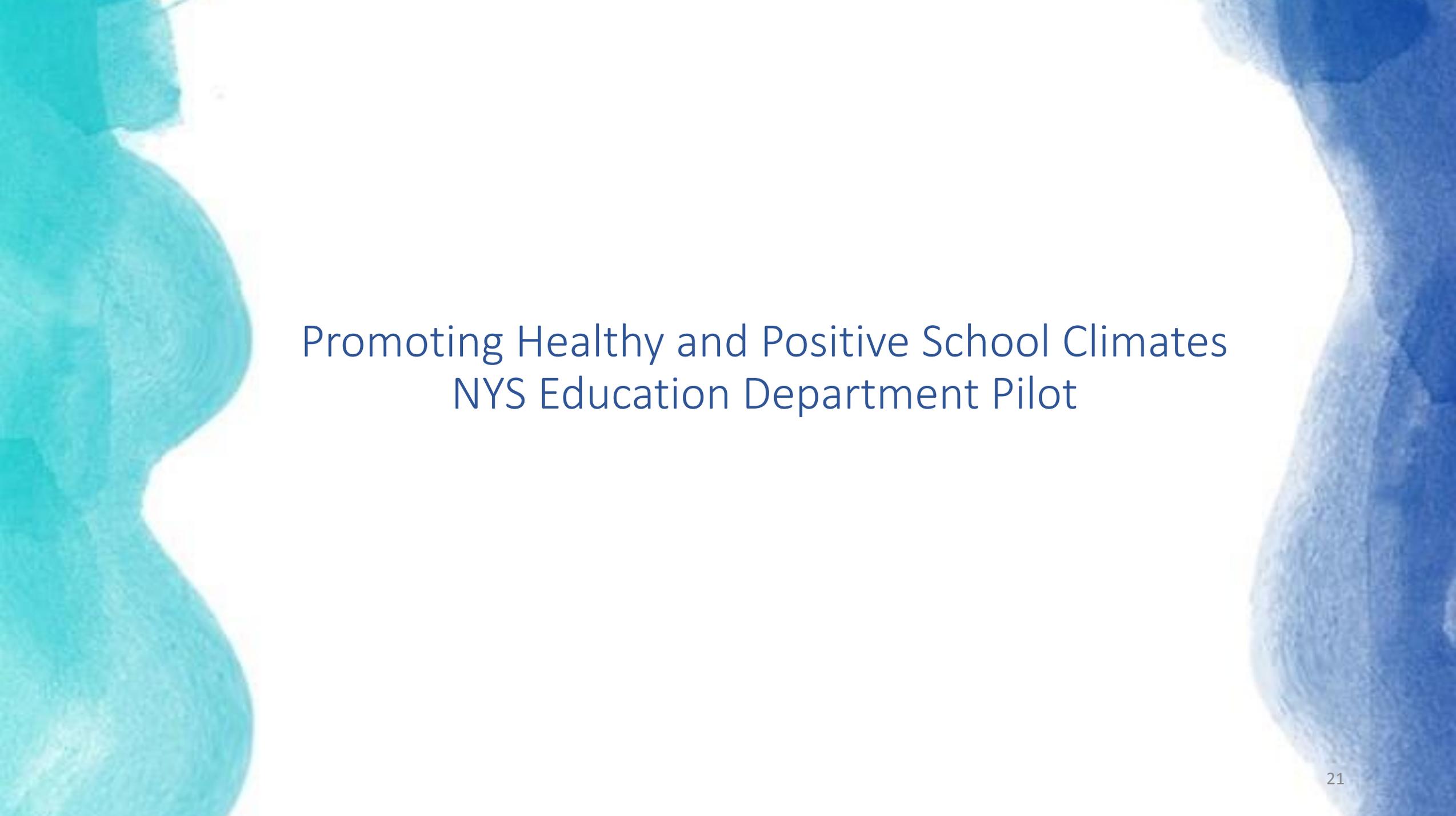
The USDE surveys summarize student survey results by subdomain and student gender, race/ethnicity, and grade.

# Student Survey Results from a Buffalo Middle School

## All Subdomains



Schools may compare the results of the USDE surveys across all subdomains, for all students, or for student subgroups.



# Promoting Healthy and Positive School Climates NYS Education Department Pilot

# 2018-19 Pilot: Expectations

- **Pilot Districts should:**

1. Develop a school climate mission statement and choose a **School Climate Framework**
2. **Establish a Community Engagement Team** that is focused on school climate improvement
3. Administer the US Department of Education school climate surveys to students, staff (instructional and non-instructional), and parents in **Spring 2019**
4. After the close of the survey window, generate reports that summarize the survey response data, review and **analyze the survey data (and other pertinent data** such as chronic absenteeism data, school discipline or violent incident data, etc.) with the Community Engagement Team
5. **Create and implement an action plan and framework** with the Community Engagement Team to address areas of need

The purpose of the school climate index is to give school administrators **a tool** to use to better understand how students, staff and parents feel about your school and how to improve the school climate so students are ready to learn and succeed.

# School Climate Frameworks Influence School Climate and Culture



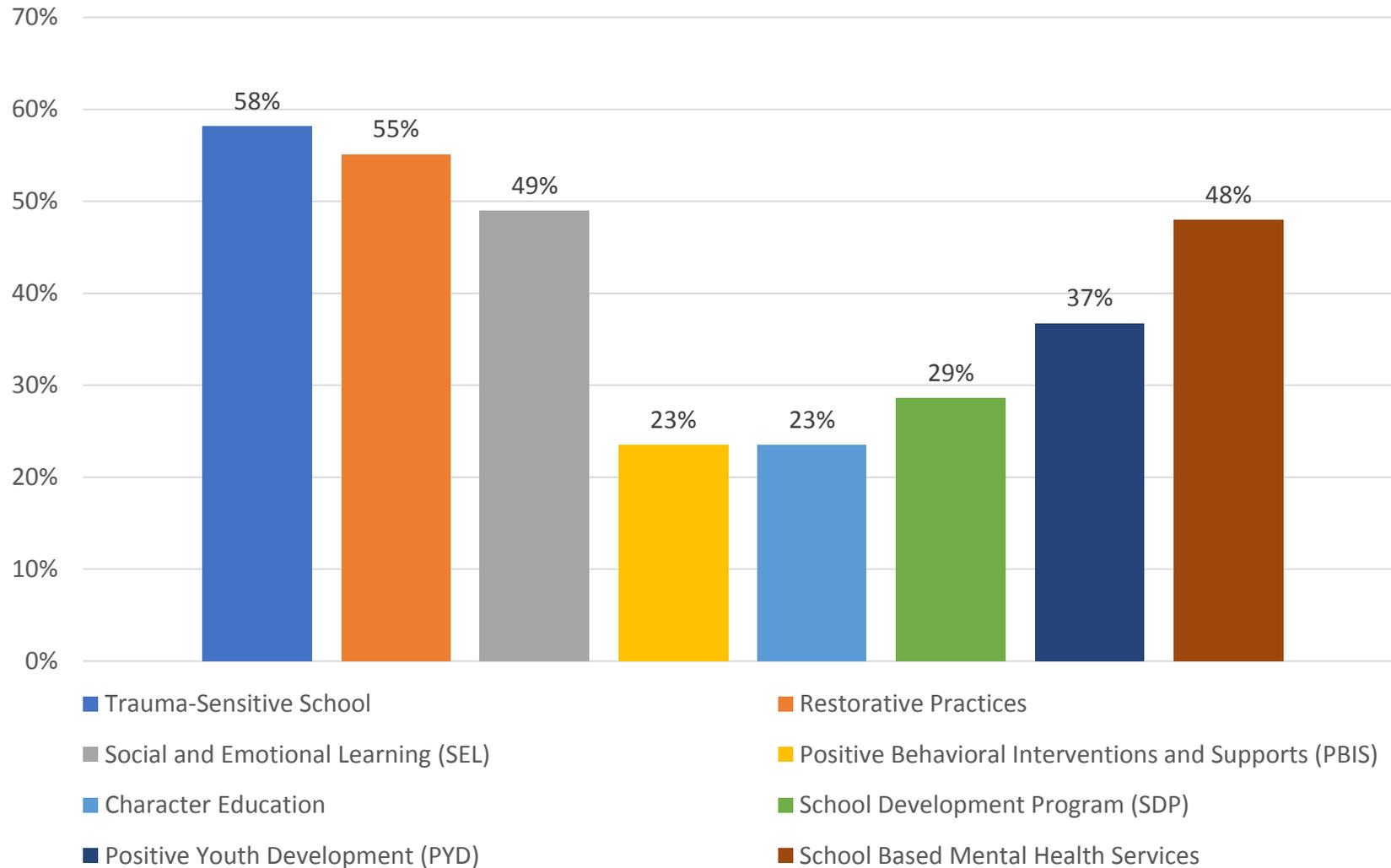
# New York State's School Climate Survey Pilot

- 2016-17 School Year Testing Pilot
  - 6 school districts (Buffalo, Rochester, Schenectady, Skaneateles, West Genesee, Niskayuna)
- 2017-18 School Year Pilot
  - Approximately 40 school districts and charter schools participating
- 2018-19 School Year Testing Pilot
  - **105 school districts and charter schools** participating
- 2019-20 School Year
  - All districts will administer school climate surveys

## What Do Administrators in New York State Want to Learn from the Survey?

- *“We are actively working to improve school climate as well as build community connections and investment in our schools so the results of the surveys would help us to understand the views of different stakeholders, especially where there might be disparities to address and opportunities for growth.”*
- *“To identify and assess conditions to improve learning and to adjust for the student needs of our community. How are the relationships and perceptions within the district impacting the teaching-learning process.”*
- *“We are seeking greater insights as to the degree to which our schools provide a nurturing learning environment that promotes physical, emotional, and intellectual safety for all stakeholders.”*
- *“How well connected are our students to each other, to our adults, to our school community? Do our teachers feel supported by resources, high quality leadership, each other and the community?”*

# What Frameworks Do Administrators in New York's School Climate Survey Pilot Want to Learn More About?



# New Initiatives from the New York State Education Department to Support Districts

- NYS Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Benchmarks and Guidance documents were released in summer 2018
- In conjunction with experts in Social and Emotional Learning and Trauma Sensitive Schools, the NYS Center for School Safety will provide regional professional development sessions on implementing SEL and Trauma Sensitive Schools.
- Beginning in the 2018-19 and continuing into the 2019-20 school year, regional multi-day training for school staff in implementing restorative practices.

# Administering the US Department of Education Climate Surveys

- Plan for a **Spring 2019** Implementation
- The U.S. Department of Education school climate survey package includes a platform for administering the surveys and summarizing survey results.
  - LEA may use the USDE platform to host their survey – this will require technical staff in district and a dedicated server, OR
  - LEA may request assistance/support from their Regional Information Center (RIC). RIC staff have been exploring options for supporting districts to make the process of administration and reporting less burdensome for school staff.
- District leadership will need to communicate with parents, students, and staff about the initiative (staff meetings, letter home to parents, school climate open house, etc.)

Note: The results are intended to be a tool for schools and districts. NYSED will not use school climate survey results as an accountability measure in 2018-19.

# Suggestions on How to Start .....

- Establish a District / School Framework and Mission Statement
- Assemble Survey Planning Team
- Decide upon desired platform to administer the Climate Survey
  - Regional Information Centers can provide Information about options for administering the School Climate Survey (if desired)
- Establish Community Engagement Team
- Identify Communication Methods
- Identify necessary resources

# District Planning and Decision Making

## **Survey Planning Team**

- The Survey Planning team determines how best to administer the survey in the district, given the resources of the district and schools, and the characteristics of the students, staff and parents being surveyed. This team also determines the need and cost for outside resources.
- An example of the Survey Planning Team would be:
  - District and School Leadership
  - District Survey Administrator (or Administrative Team)
  - School Survey Coordinator(s)

# District Planning and Decision Making

## Survey Planning Team

- District and School Leadership
  - Establishes the vision
  - Communicates with staff, students and parents about the initiative
  - Decision making (timeline, process, etc.)
  - Allocates necessary resources
- District Survey Administrator (or Administrative Team)
  - Coordinates technical aspects of deploying survey application and implementation of survey (may include obtaining/installing additional servers needed to host the survey, working with RIC staff, etc.)
  - Coordinates the generation and distribution of usernames to respondents or school survey coordinators
  - Monitors participation throughout survey administration window and follows up with building survey administrators regarding low participation
  - Monitors response rates during survey implementation
  - Generates survey results after the close of the survey
- School Survey Coordinator(s)
  - Answer questions from proctors and respondents
  - Distributes usernames
  - Recruits and trains survey proctors

# District Planning and Decision Making

## Administration/Implementation

- Determine dates survey will be administered
- Identify policy and procedures for gathering parental consent
- Determine when and how student surveys will be administered (i.e. class period, physical location, laptops/tablets/computer room/paper)
- Plan staff accessibility to computers during school hours
- Plan for parent access to computers at the school
- Identify and assess the strength and weaknesses of various ongoing contact methods to parents (through emails, websites, postal mailings, other)
- Once obtained, determine how usernames will be distributed (via email or paper distribution)

# District Planning and Decision Making

- Communication/Training
  - Develop a Communication Plan to determine how and when this information will be messaged to staff, parents and students
  - Implement Communication Plan (discuss at staff meetings, send letters home, parents night, PTA meetings, emails, etc.)
  - Develop and distribute training guidance for proctors and those who will administer of survey
  - Develop/distribute guidance for parents (why are we doing this, how will you share the results with parents?)
  - Determine turn-key training resources and methods
  - Provide feedback to NYSED/reach out with questions (schoolclimate@nysed.gov)

# District Planning and Decision Making

## Technical Support

- Determine hosting platform, necessary hardware and software resources, and responsible staff
- Identify any necessary Firewall/Security changes
- Determine additional servers and equipment necessary and associated cost
- Identify “outside” resources necessary to host application
- Identify devices that will be used to take the survey for students, staff, parents (laptops, computer room, tablets, other) and necessary quantity of devices in the school
- Prepare the environment for servers and other communication devices
- Deploy and test application prior to survey start date
- Determine technical support staff necessary before and during the survey window

# Survey Outcomes

# Survey Results

## District Survey Administrator or Administrative Team

After survey window closes, the District Survey Administrator generates results and meets with School/District Leadership to discuss the survey outcome.

- Reporting
  - Understand the reports provided with the application and how to capture the survey results from the database
  - Determine the necessary staff resources, cost, and timeframe to produce reports
- Communication
  - Communicate results to School/District Leadership
  - School/District Leadership communicates results to **Community Engagement Team**
  - Analyze the survey data (and other pertinent data such as chronic absenteeism data, suspension and dropout data, violent incident data, etc.) with the **Community Engagement Team**
  - **Create and implement an action plan and framework** with the Community Engagement Team to address areas of need (Social Emotional Learning, Trauma Informed Practices, Restorative Practices, PBIS etc.)

# What are the Expected Outcomes?

- Increased awareness of areas of need in school or district
- Increased dialogue between students, staff, parents about school culture and climate
- Data to inform policy and improvement
- Ultimately, better engaged and happier students, staff and parents – resulting in improved student outcomes

# Next Steps

# What's Next?

- Districts/Schools participating in the pilot should review the materials from USDE, discuss internally and ask SED any additional questions
- Districts/Schools may opt to contact their Regional Information Center (RIC) for assistance with Survey Implementation and Administration
- Future webinar/meeting schedule:
  - Friday, January 4, 2018 at 1:00 pm (repeat this presentation)
  - Regional calls beginning in January so you can ask questions, share concerns
- Summer 2018 –Professional Development Sessions on School Climate, Social Emotional Learning, Trauma and Restorative Practices



# Questions?

# Resources

- NYSED Climate Survey email – [SchoolClimate@nysed.gov](mailto:SchoolClimate@nysed.gov)
- SSS School Climate Survey Pilot Page - <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssae/schoolsafety/SchoolClimateSurveyPilot.html>
- NYS Center for School Safety - <http://www.nyscfss.org/>
- USDOE Climate Surveys: <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/EDSCLS%20Questionnaires.pdf>
- USDOE Climate Page: <https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/edscls/index.asp>
- [Presentation to the Board of Regents](#) in November 2017 about school climate surveys and school climate improvement

