

Your Question:

You asked for information on how other states are using school climate in their state accountability systems.

Our Response:

School Climate generally refers to the interrelated aspects of the quality and character of school life—which encompass the physical, social and academic environments within a school. [Research shows](#) that a strong school climate may have far-reaching positive impacts on academic performance, overall student engagement and teacher retention. According to the [National School Climate Center](#), a positive school climate includes the following elements:

- Norms, values and expectations that support people feeling socially, emotionally, and physically safe
- People are engaged and respected
- Students, families and educators work together to develop a contribute to a shared school vision
- Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning
- Each person contributes to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment

ESSA and School Climate

Under ESSA, states were given the opportunity to choose an indicator of school quality or student success (SQSS) to include in their accountability systems. Some states chose to use measures of school climate as either all—or part—of this SQSS indicator. States using school climate typically either measure schools based on participation in the survey or based on the data those surveys produce. According to a [recent report](#) published by the [Learning Policy Institute](#), since the final approval of state ESSA plans, 8 states are [measuring school climate](#) in their accountability system by using student surveys. Approximately 6 of these states are also using data from these surveys to inform their school improvement efforts.

This [interactive resource](#) provides further detail on how each state is using school climate within their accountability system, school improvement system, or for other purposes under ESSA. The following states are using school climate surveys as part of their accountability system:

- **Idaho:** Using data from a [satisfaction and engagement](#) survey administered to students in grades 3-8.
- **Illinois:** Using data from the '[5 Essentials](#)' survey administered to parents, teachers, students and administrators in grades 6-12.
- **Iowa:** Using student data from its [Conditions for Learning](#) survey.
- **Maryland:** Using data from a [school climate survey](#) administered to students and educators in all grades.
- **Nevada:** Recognizing schools that have a 75% or above **participation rate** in the state's [school climate survey](#).
- **New Mexico:** Using student response data from an 'Opportunity to Learn' survey that includes measures of school climate and is administered to students in grades K-11 and their parents.
- **North Dakota:** Using data from a [school climate and engagement](#) survey that is administered to students in all grades.
- **South Carolina:** Using a [student engagement survey](#) to measure school climate for students in grades 3-12.

In addition to the states outlines by LPI above, [ECS has identified two other states](#) including school climate in their accountability systems as part of their SQSS indicator:

- [Kentucky’s Opportunity and Access indicator](#) varies for elementary, and high school students and incorporates multiple measures, including access to arts, health, science, social studies, CTE, cultural studies, world languages, gifted and talented services, rigorous coursework, and measures of school climate through chronic absenteeism, behavior events, and restraint/seclusion.
- [Montana includes a measure of school quality](#) that considers high quality implementation of programs to improve school climate, reduce behavior issues and increase engagement.