

2017–2018 Student Climate Survey Results

Student Climate Perceptions Slightly Down From 2016–2017

What was the purpose of the Student Climate Survey?

Austin Independent School District (AISD) uses the Student Climate Survey to gather students' opinions and perceptions of school climate in the spring of every academic year. The survey comprises 44 items related to student engagement, behavioral environment, academic self-confidence, adult fairness and respect, teacher expectations, culture and language, social and emotional learning (SEL) skills, and college intentions. Survey data are used to monitor a variety of key initiatives and policies and examine factors related to student achievement and teacher success. This report summarizes district-level survey results for the 2016–2018 academic years.

How did students rate school climate in 2017–2018?

Students' perceptions were largely unchanged or slightly down from the previous year across most survey items. Elementary school students continued to report a positive and engaging school experience. High school students reported high ratings on items related to SEL skills, but felt significantly less safe at school in comparison to last year. In addition, significantly fewer students across all levels reported that they used strategies to calm themselves down.

The following tables display the percentage of students who responded *a lot of the time* or *sometimes* to each survey item. A report detailing survey results by ethnicity/race, gender, socioeconomic status, special education status, and English learner status will be released in the coming months.

Student Engagement

Table 1.

Elementary school students continued to report the highest levels of engagement and enjoyment with respect to schoolwork and homework. A substantial minority of middle and high school students did not feel teachers connected classwork with the real world.

Student engagement	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
I like to come to school.	83%	83%	79% ^{a,b}	68%	72%	66% ^a	69%	74%	67% ^b
I enjoy doing my schoolwork.	81%	80%	77% ^{a,b}	59%	63%	57% ^{a,c}	60%	63%	55% ^{b,c}
My homework helps me learn the things I need to know.	87%	86%	82% ^{a,b}	70%	70%	67% ^{a,c}	73%	73%	69% ^{b,c}
My schoolwork makes me think about things in new ways.	84%	85%	83% ^{a,b}	69%	75%	73% ^a	70%	75%	72% ^b
I have fun learning in my classes.	88%	88%	86% ^{a,b}	69%	76%	72% ^a	71%	78%	73% ^b
My teachers connect what I am doing to my life outside the classroom.	79%	80%	77% ^{a,b}	58%	62%	59% ^a	61%	66%	60% ^b
I receive recognition or praise for doing good work.	88%	91%	87% ^{a,b}	75%	83% ⁺	77% ^{a,c}	74%	82%	74% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$). Significant year-over-year change within school level is indicated by + symbols.

Behavioral Environment

Table 2.

While a substantial majority of students reported feeling safe at school, perceptions of school safety at the high school level declined significantly from 2016–2017.

Behavioral environment	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
My classmates show respect to each other.	87%	88%	87% ^{a,b}	80%	83%	82% ^{a,c}	88%	89%	89% ^{b,c}
My classmates show respect to other students who are different.	85%	85%	84% ^{a,b}	79%	81%	79% ^{a,c}	86%	89%	87% ^{b,c}
I am happy with the way my classmates treat me..	85%	85%	84% ^{a,b}	86%	88%	87% ^{a,c}	91%	93%	93% ^{b,c}
I feel safe at my school.	92%	92%	91% ^{a,b}	86%	88%	84% ^{a,c}	89%	93%	85% ^{b,c+}
Students at this school treat teachers with respect.	88%	89%	88% ^{a,b}	74%	76%	75% ^{a,c}	81%	87%	84% ^{b,c}
Students at my school follow the school rules.	80%	83%	85% ^{a,b}	63%	67%	69% ^{a,c}	73%	79%	77% ^{b,c}
My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to.	74%	76%	74% ^{a,b}	62%	66%	63% ^{a,c}	74%	80%	78% ^{b,c}
Our classes stay busy and do not waste time.	82%	84%	83% ^{a,b}	74%	80%	79% ^{a,c}	82%	88%	87% ^{b,c}
Students at my school are bullied (teased, messed with, threatened by other students).	48%	50%	51% ^a	61%	61%	64% ^{a,c}	51%	45%	51% ^c
At my school, students take care of each other.	*	*	85% ^{a,b}	*	*	76% ^{a,c}	*	*	83% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$). Significant year-over-year change within school level is indicated by + symbols. Cells with an asterisk indicate a new item.

Academic Self-Confidence

Table 3.

Students continued to voice high levels of confidence regarding their schoolwork, though significant differences existed in perceptions of schoolwork success between school levels.

Academic self-confidence	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
I can do even the hardest schoolwork if I try.	91%	91%	89% ^{a,b}	85%	88%	86% ^a	86%	90%	87% ^b
I can reach the goals I set for myself.	92%	93%	91% ^a	89%	91%	89% ^{a,c}	90%	93%	91% ^c
I try hard to do my best work.	97%	98%	97% ^{a,b}	92%	94%	94% ^a	90%	94%	94% ^b
I feel successful in my schoolwork.	92%	93%	91% ^{a,b}	87%	89%	87% ^{a,c}	85%	88%	85% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$).

Statistical and Meaningful Differences

A z test for proportions was used to determine whether the observed differences between students' responses based on school level were indicative of a significant difference or likely due to chance. Significant differences are noted with superscripts.

Cohen's h measure of effect size was used to determine whether the magnitude of change year-over-year was meaningful. Effect sizes greater than or equal to .20 are considered meaningful in education research and are noted with a plus sign (+) in this report.

About the Survey

AISD students in grades 3 through 11 have participated in the Student Climate Survey since 2004. Survey response options consist of (4) *a lot of the time*, (3) *sometimes*, (2) *a little of the time*, (1) *never*, and *don't know*. As with previous years, *don't know* responses are excluded from all calculations.

In 2018, we added additional items to further assess students' perceptions of SEL skills.

All schools administered the survey online in 2018.

Adult Fairness and Respect

Table 4.

Students continued to report high levels of agreement that adults at school treated them with fairness and respect. However, middle and high school students felt less confident than did elementary students that adults at school listened to their ideas and opinions.

Adult fairness and respect	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Teachers at this school care about their students.	97%	97%	96% ^{a,b}	89%	90%	89% ^{a,c}	89%	92%	90% ^{b,c}
Adults at this school listen to student ideas and opinions.	93%	92%	91% ^{a,b}	80%	81%	79% ^a	82%	83%	80% ^b
Adults at this school treat all students fairly.	94%	94%	94% ^{a,b}	82%	85%	84% ^a	84%	87%	86% ^b
The staff in the front office show respect to students.	97%	97%	97% ^{a,b}	91%	93%	93% ^{a,c}	87%	89%	89% ^{b,c}
My teachers are fair to everyone.	94%	94%	93% ^{a,b}	82%	85%	84% ^{a,c}	84%	89%	87% ^{b,c}
Teachers at this school know who I am.	92%	95%	93% ^{a,b}	87%	92%	90% ^{a,c}	84%	90%	87% ^{b,c}
My teachers know what I am good at.	94%	96%	93% ^{a,b}	82%	89%	83% ^{a,c}	81%	86%	80% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$).

Teacher Expectations

Table 5.

Students across school levels remained confident that teachers had high expectations for them.

Teacher expectations	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
My teachers expect me to think hard about the things we read.	96%	96%	95% ^{a,b}	90%	93%	93% ^a	90%	94%	94% ^b
My teachers expect everybody to work hard.	98%	98%	98% ^{a,b}	94%	96%	95% ^a	93%	96%	96% ^b

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$).

Culture and Language

Table 6.

While most students felt that their school community was respectful of different cultures and languages, a substantial percentage of students believed that some of their peers were not treated fairly because of who they were.

Culture and language	Elementary		Middle		High	
	2017	2018	2017	2018	2017	2018
At my school, there is respect for different cultures.	*	94% ^{a,b}	*	88% ^{a,c}	*	91% ^{b,c}
At my school, there is respect for students who speak languages other than English.	94%	94% ^a	90%	91% ^{a,c}	92%	94% ^c
At my school, some students are not treated fairly because of who they are.	*	49% ^{a,b}	*	60% ^{a,c}	*	52% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$). Cells with an asterisk indicate new items.

SEL Skills

Table 7.

While most students felt confident in their ability to persist through frustration and follow the rules in the face of peer pressure, students across all school levels reported more difficulty using ways to calm themselves down than did so in 2016–2017.

SEL skills	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
I use ways to calm myself down.	83%	88%	75% ^{a,b+}	75%	83%	72% ^{a,c+}	80%	88% ⁺	80% ^{b,c+}
I don't give up, even when I feel frustrated.	89%	93%	88% ^{a,b}	82%	88%	85% ^a	82%	87%	85% ^b
It is easy for me to talk to adults at my school about my problems.	73%	76%	75% ^{a,b}	59%	63%	62% ^a	60%	65%	62% ^b
I say "no" to friends who want me to break the rules.	91%	95%	88% ⁺	86%	91%	87% ^c	87%	93%	89%
During my school day, I am aware of when my feelings change.	*	*	87% ^b	*	*	88% ^c	*	*	92% ^{b,c}
During my school day, I am aware of when my thoughts change from positive to negative.	*	*	87% ^{a,b}	*	*	89% ^{a,c}	*	*	93% ^{b,c}
During my school day, I am aware of how my body feels when my feelings change.	*	*	88% ^b	*	*	87% ^c	*	*	91% ^{b,c}
At my school, I often notice how people feel and act.	*	*	90% ^a	*	*	88% ^{a,c}	*	*	90% ^c
If I get angry with a classmate, we can talk about it and make it better.	*	*	77% ^{a,b}	*	*	66% ^{a,c}	*	*	74% ^{b,c}
I make friends easily at school.	*	*	88% ^b	*	*	87% ^c	*	*	83% ^{b,c}

Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *sometimes* or *a lot of the time*. Matched superscripts indicate significant differences across school levels ($p < .05$). Significant year-over-year change within school level is indicated by + symbols. Cells with an asterisk indicate new items.

College Intentions

Table 8.

Confidence in college intentions remained consistent with previous years.

College intentions	Elementary			Middle			High		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
I will go to college after high school.	74%	73%	73%	76%	76%	74%	75%	76%	75%

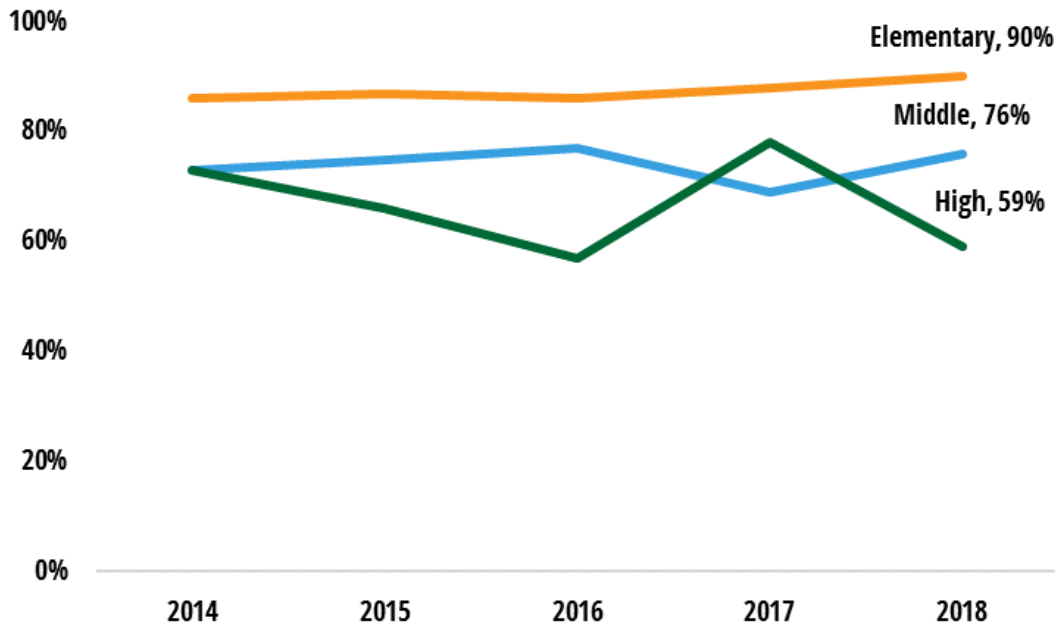
Source. 2016–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Note. Figures represent the percentage of students who responded *yes*. Other response options included *no* and *maybe*.

Who responded to the survey?

Figure 1.

Response rates remained steady among elementary and middle school students. After a relatively high response rate last year, only 59% of eligible high school students participated in the survey this year.



Source. 2014–2015 through 2017–2018 Student Climate Surveys

Where can I find more information?

Previous reports can be found on the Department of Research and Evaluation [website](#). Beginning this year, Student Climate Survey results are available through an interactive dashboard that permits users to filter data by school, grade, race/ethnicity, gender, and a number of other characteristics. Instructions for accessing the dashboard can be found by visiting [here](#) and clicking on Student Climate Survey > See Current Reports. Reports further exploring this year’s Student Climate Survey data will be published in the coming months.



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