



STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

A Memo from the New Jersey Department of Education

Date: March 1, 2023

To: Local Educational Agency Leads, Administrators of Approved Private Schools for Students with Disabilities

Route To: Administrators, Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors of Counseling, School Counselors, Anti-Bullying Coordinators, Anti-Bullying Specialists, Student Assistance Coordinators, School Safety Specialists

From: Kathy Ehling, Assistant Commissioner
Division of Educational Services

Build Stronger Communities with the New Jersey School Climate Improvement Platform

Schools are locations where students not only learn academics, but also learn to be community members and citizens. A positive [school culture and climate](#) is essential for fostering academic achievement, increasing school attendance, and promoting healthy social emotional development. The benefits of a positive school culture and climate extend beyond students to educators and is correlated with increased teacher satisfaction and retention.

To support schools in their efforts to make data-driven decisions around school climate, the New Jersey Department of Education is excited to announce that the improved [New Jersey School Climate Improvement \(NJ SCI\) Platform](#) is now available. Developed in collaboration with the School Climate Transformation Project Team at Rutgers University, the NJ SCI Platform features a new and enhanced comprehensive survey instrument that will help schools understand their school climate needs and strengths from the perspectives of students, families, and staff. Beyond the school climate surveys for students, families and staff, NJ-SCI will support schools in understanding their data by providing data insights that draw attention to areas of the school's climate indicating greater need for attention.

Highlights of the NJ SCI Platform include:

- *Cost-effective:* There is no fee to access the platform or use the web-based surveys.
- *Comprehensive:* Provides insight into a school community's relationships, safety, sense of connectedness, teaching and learning, and measures of an equitable and supportive learning environment, including supports for social and emotional learning.
- *Data Reports:* Upon completion of the survey, school climate teams will have access to information that will assist them as they can begin the process of taking efforts to enhance school climate.
- *Available in Multiple Languages:* Surveys for students and families are currently available in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Brazilian Portuguese, and Arabic.
- *Resources & Support:* The survey platform is user-friendly and includes web-based tutorials on survey administration and school climate improvement efforts as well as supports for analyzing data and goal setting.

Additional Resources & Information

To further support the development of school climate action plans that foster optimum learning environments for students, schools may find it helpful to utilize the newly released [NJ SCI Strategy Resource](#). The resource includes a selection of research-based strategies (e.g., anti-bullying interventions, mindset and motivation, student voice and empowerment, etc.), supporting evidence, sample components, and links to free online resources.

To learn more about utilizing NJ SCI, the School Climate Transformation Project Team, in partnership with NJDOE, will host an information session during the SEL Day Summit on Friday, March 10, 2023. Additional details can be found on the summit [registration page](#).

Schools interested in receiving additional information on NJ SCI should complete an interest form on the [NJ SCI website](#). Please email additional questions to SchoolClimate@doe.nj.gov.

c: Members, State Board of Education
NJDOE Staff
Statewide Parent Advocacy Network
Garden State Coalition of Schools
NJ LEE Group