

Parents:

Our school is getting ready to administer an annual school climate and culture survey called Conditions for Learning to students in grades 6-8. This survey administration is required by the state's plan to meet a federal law called the Every Student Succeeds Act. Our school will conduct the survey the week of May 6, 2019. All Iowa public school districts will use the Conditions for Learning Survey to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment so that all Iowa students have optimum conditions for learning. Our work to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment will have a lasting impact on the future.

We will ask your child to simply fill out a confidential [private] survey. The survey will focus on issues ranging from student safety, to positive student relationships, to school rules and how they are enforced. A high rate of participation by students in completing the Conditions for Learning Survey is important for obtaining the most complete school climate data for our school. Support from you in communicating to your students that this is their chance to be heard and to be part of the effort to improve conditions for learning at their school is critical.

Thank you for partnering with Indianola Middle School to improve conditions for learning throughout the state. Included in the link below is an overview of this opportunity, as well as:

1. An information summary about the student surveys
2. A written refusal form if you do not want your child/children to participate in completing the Survey

Dear Parent, Guardian, or other Legally Responsible Adult:

Our school is getting ready to administer an annual school climate and culture survey called Conditions for Learning to students in grades 6-8. This survey administration is required by the state's plan to meet a federal law called the Every Student Succeeds Act. Our school will conduct the survey during the week of May 6, 2019. All Iowa public school districts will use the Conditions for Learning Survey to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment so that all Iowa students have optimum conditions for learning. Our work to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment will have a lasting impact on the future.

Iowa measures conditions for learning by asking the real experts each year - **STUDENTS**. **This is their chance to make their voice heard, and we intend to listen.** Studies have shown this work matters. Improving skills such as solving problems, working out conflict, and working with other people in a group has led to **double-digit increases** on achievement test scores, improved classroom behavior and improved attitudes.

All public schools in Iowa will use the statewide online survey to assess the Conditions for Learning in their school grades 3 through 12. Indianola Middle School will receive timely data annually at the building level in the fall to support alignment of professional development with identified needs of students.

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Thank you for partnering with Indianola Middle School to improve conditions for learning throughout the state. Included in this packet is an overview of this opportunity, as well as:

- 1) An information summary about the student surveys
- 2) A written refusal form if you **do not** want your child/children to participate in completing the Survey

Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you again!

Sincerely,

Art Sathoff, Superintendent
Annette Jauron, Principal

1. INFORMATION SUMMARY FOR STUDENT SURVEY

During the Spring of 2019 if your child is in grades 3 - 12, your child will be invited to complete a brief Conditions for Learning Survey online. **Participation in the Survey is nameless and strictly voluntary, and no student is required to fill out the survey.** The Survey will take about 30 minutes to complete.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the Survey is to obtain information about how students feel about the culture and climate of their school and teachers, as well as the safety of their school. The information collected will help the state, our schools, and local community improve the school. It is important to ask children to tell us what is good and working about their experience in school, and what needs to be improved, in their eyes. You may review Survey questions located in the office of your school or request an electronic version.

Parental Rights:

- You have the right and the responsibility to be informed about what your child volunteers to participate in at school.
- You have the right to receive accurate information about the Conditions for Learning Survey in order for you to make good decisions for your family.

Confidentiality:

All information collected will be nameless. Students will not put names, birthdates, or any other way to identify them on the Survey, and all surveys will be private. Results are reported only in terms of the way various groups of people have responded. [In an effort to maintain anonymity, information on results for sub-groups (by race, gender, grade, etc) with fewer than ten people are omitted.]

Compensation:

There will be no payment or reward for students filling out the Survey.

Voluntary:

- All students in grades 3-12 will be invited to fill out the Conditions for Learning Survey. Students will have the right to refuse to answer any questions on the Survey. If a student decides they want to change their mind and not complete the Survey they may do so.
- If, as a parent or legally approved adult, you do not want your child/children to participate, you must send the school the *Refusal of Consent* form provided in this letter, and your child/children will be provided with another activity during the Survey class period. There is no penalty for anyone who decides not to participate.

Risk:

There is no direct risk in filling out the Survey. Students may find some questions uncomfortable or difficult to answer. They may leave blank any question they do not wish to answer and may stop taking the survey at any point.

Benefits:

The data collected throughout the state will provide schools and communities with the information they need to provide programs that will support schools, communities and families in keeping their children safe and hopeful about their future.

Reviewing the Surveys:

Copies of the brief Conditions for Learning Survey are available to review at the school office or an electronic version can be provided to you.

Questions:

Questions regarding the brief Conditions for Learning Survey are welcome. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your school principal or Staci Hupp, Iowa Department of Education, Staci.Hupp@iowa.gov .

2. WRITTEN REFUSAL FORM

I have read the information Summary provided. I understand that my child/children's participation in the Survey is *voluntary*. I also understand my right to review the surveys at the school office and District Administration Office until the date of Survey administration. I **do not** want my child/children listed below to complete the Conditions for Learning Survey. I understand that a different activity will be provided for them during the Survey time and that there is no penalty for my family members not completing the Survey. I understand that refusal of consent needs to be received by the school no later than the date that the Survey is administered. Please return this form with your child's name and your name signed below to the building principal if you do not want your child to participate.

Names of child/children who will not participate in completing the brief Conditions for Learning Survey online in Spring 2019:

Child Name

Grade

Child Name

Grade

Child Name

Grade

Signature: Parent/Guardian/Legally Responsible Adult

Date

COMMUNITY TALKING POINTS

The purpose of this document is to provide school districts with talking points to use with members of the school community to understand the importance of the Iowa Conditions for Learning Survey. They can be used in a letter or in verbal announcements. There may be more points than can fit into one letter, so decide which points are most important for your school community.

Consider using your School Improvement Advisory Committee, PTA or other core groups to introduce the Iowa Conditions for Learning Survey and explore the kinds of questions or concerns that may arise. This group could also be engaged in helping to get the word out about the survey.

- Our students in grades 6-8 will take a survey designed to measure their engagement in school, safety and overall learning environment during the week of May 6th.
- Our school(s) are required to administer this survey, called Conditions for Learning, annually as part of Iowa's plan to meet the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). ESSA recently replaced the No Child Left Behind Act, and Iowa's plan serves as the foundation for our state's system of school accountability and support.
- Conditions for Learning is one of up to seven measures used to determine accountability scores for schools. We embrace the Conditions for Learning measure because it takes our accountability focus beyond test scores and looks at student performance more holistically.
- Research shows students thrive academically when they feel safe, actively engaged in their learning, and when they have positive relationships with adults and other students at school.
- Results from the Conditions for Learning survey also will serve as a great tool to help our schools, teachers, and parents identify areas of strength, as well as areas that may need attention or support.
- Our students' participation in the survey is very important to our school because results can help us build an action plan to improve the learning environment. A high rate of completion means getting the best data possible.
- For students, the survey is an important opportunity to be heard and to be part of efforts to improve their learning environment. We appreciate the community's support in communicating to students about this great opportunity.
- Survey results are completely anonymous. No names are recorded, and no identifying information will be attached to specific responses.
- While our students will be encouraged to answer as many questions as possible, they will not be required to answer any questions that make them feel uncomfortable.