



Information for Teachers

Surveys of Student Engagement

The High School Survey of Student Engagement (HSSSE, pronounced “hessee”) and the Middle Grades Survey of Student Engagement (MGSSE, pronounces “mugsee”) are part of a research and professional development project directed by the Center for Evaluation, Policy, & Research (CEPR is under the Office of the Vice Provost for Research) at Indiana University. The project has three primary purposes: (1) to help middle and high schools explore, understand, and strengthen student engagement, (2) to work with teachers and administrators on utilizing survey data to improve practices, and (3) to conduct research on student engagement.

The Survey

The survey investigates the levels and dimensions of student engagement in the life and work of schools, providing schools with rich and valuable data on students’ beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about their experience, their involvement, and their connectedness with school. The MGSSE was adapted from the HSSSE, a high school-level student engagement survey that has been taken by more than 500,000 students in over 40 states since 2004. Many schools have used their student engagement survey data in their efforts to improve both the academic performance of their students and the teaching and learning environment in their schools.

Why Schools Use the Survey

Schools, including yours, have chosen to participate in the survey. Often schools use the survey because they want to get a sense of how their students feel about their school experience and how students engage in the life and work of the school. Some schools are looking to gather data – other than performance and achievement data – that can help them with reform efforts. Some schools are making efforts to strengthen their school community, to make the school a more important and welcoming place for students, a more supportive place socially and academically, and a place that truly prepares students for further schooling and/or work. Schools can use the information they get from the survey immediately to improve their environment and the work they do.

The Process

After students complete the survey, we take the responses and create a report for your school. This report is unique for your school – it is a summary report and analysis of your students’ responses, detailed both in the context of your school and, for many schools, comparisons to other schools. Schools often use this data report to understand their students’ attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs, and to make immediate changes in the school environment.

Why Students Should Take the Survey Seriously

It is critically important for students to be thoughtful, serious, and honest in filling out their surveys (though, participation is entirely voluntary and students may not be required to participate nor penalized for not participating). As a result of students' responses, your school will better understand students' needs and will be able to create a school environment that is engaging, challenging, and productive. Schools that choose to participate in the HSSSE/MGSSE surveys are ready to hear what students have to say and to make changes in response to what they find in the data. This process works because students respond to the survey questions thoughtfully and honestly.

Administering the Survey

Each school that chooses to participate and offer students the opportunity to complete HSSSE or MGSSE has a contact person who receives all survey administration instructions from our team. We allow schools to choose from several methods of administering the survey that best meets your schools needs and resources, provided that students are properly informed about their rights as a participant in the surveys.

If your school has chosen an administration method that requires teachers to distribute the survey (paper form or online link) to students, your school's contact person must provide you with all necessary instructions. We strive to make the surveys as easy to administer for schools and teachers as possible, but have strict requirements in place for students to be properly informed about the surveys and their potential participation. If you have not received these instructions, please speak with your school's contact person.

If at any point you have questions or would like more information, please contact us directly by phone (812-855-4438) or by e-mail (HSSSE@IU.edu) (email preferred for fastest response).

Thank you – we appreciate the work you are doing