



Frequently Asked Questions for Researchers (doctoral students and social scientists) interested in Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI)

1. What is CSCI and what dimensions does it cover?

The Comprehensive School Climate Inventory (CSCI) is one of the nation's most scientifically sound and helpful surveys that provide immediate feedback on how students, parents, and school personnel perceive their school's particular climate for learning. Vetted by three independent reviews of school climate measures, and a core group of practice and policy leaders, the CSCI is considered to be one of the top school climate surveys in the field. The full list of dimensions measured by the CSCI can be accessed from the link below:

http://www.schoolclimate.org/programs/documents/dimensions_chart_pagebars.pdf

2. How can CSCI be used?

The CSCI can be used in two major ways quantitatively: as a needs assessment and as a pre-post measure of change over time. The CSCI—like all school climate measures—is not an appropriate measurement tool (or “normed measure”) that can be used to compare schools. NSCC developed the CSCI first and for most to support the whole school community learning, engagement and working together to understand your school communities strengths and needs. The CSCI can also be used as a pre-post measure of change over time.

3. What is the research behind the CSCI?

Developed by the National School Climate Center in 2002, the CSCI has been developed in a scientifically sound manner. Please go to the link below for details about how the CSCI has been developed.

http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/documents/How_CSCI_was_developed.pdf

The CSCI has been recognized as a scientifically sound assessment tool in four independent evaluations. Renowned by educators, researchers, and experts alike, the CSCI has been selected as one of only three school climate surveys that met the American Psychological Associations criteria for being a reliable and valid tool in a 2010 study of 102 surveys (Gangi, 2009). A recent 2011 independent evaluation by Social Development Research Group (University of Washington) of 72 (i) social emotional learning measures and (ii) school climate surveys for middle schools reported that ten met their criteria for being reliable and valid. The CSCI was one of these ten measures and the only school climate measure that was recommended (Haggerty, Elgin, & Woolley, 2010). A 2012 review of valid and reliable school climate measured by the

American Institute of Research that initially looked at 1000 surveys that could be used to gauge principal performance. This initial large group of surveys was reduced to about 125 surveys that were studied in much more detail. This brief identified 13 school climate surveys that displayed publicly available evidence of psychometric rigor. The CSCI was one of the 13 surveys recommended. And, out of this group of 13, the CSCI was one of two surveys that recognized student, parent/guardian and school personnel voice (Clifford, Menon, Gangi, Condon, & Hornung, 2012). A recent study of the CSCI by researchers at Fordham University confirmed that the CSCI is a scientifically valid tool (Guo, Choe, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2011). The U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Supportive Schools Technical Assistance Center also recognizes the CSCI as a reliable and valid measurement tool.

4. Is CSCI free for external researchers?

No, due to the cost involved in the development of CSCI over a decade, the survey tool is not free. The pricing is determined based on a number of factors including the population size of the school, number of schools within a district that are participating, etc. Additional costs are also factored in based on paper survey needs, custom items or additional reporting.

5. Is there a discount for graduate/doctoral students for using CSCI?

NSCC is invested in supporting the field and graduate/doctoral students conducting research in this field. As such we are committed to supporting doctoral students who will use the CSCI for approved dissertation related efforts. We will be happy to provide 50% discount off the total cost.

6. Can an external researcher use only one version of the CSCI (e.g., only student survey, or only the staff survey)?

Yes.

7. Can an external researcher use only selected items or dimensions from CSCI?

No. CSCI is an instrument that is designed to “capture” the school climate of a school as a whole (covering all the dimensions mentioned above). Therefore, we cannot provide only sub-domains of the CSCI for doctoral research purposes.

8. Can an external researcher use only the CSCI items (and not use the administration support and reporting) for his/her research?

No. The purchase of CSCI comes as a package that includes the online administrative support for CSCI and the CSCI reports. However, if reporting is not needed, this can be discussed between the researcher and NSCC team.

9. Can graduate/doctoral students have access to the raw CSCI data?

Yes. Graduate/doctoral students can receive the raw CSCI data for their own analysis. However, the researcher who is using the data has to agree to all the conditions in the agreement letter that is given before the data is shared. See answers to the next questions for these conditions.

10. What are conditions for external researchers to use CSCI?

- a. Comply with the copyright for the CSCI.
- b. Use the CSCI data solely for research purposes, and not share the CSCI items or data with external parties.
- c. Acknowledge NSCC for any mention of the CSCI data in briefs/papers, etc.
- d. Share a final version of the research study/ dissertation with NSCC.

References

Clifford, M., Menon, R, Gangi, T., & Condon, C. & Hornung, K, (2012). *Measuring School Climate for Gauging Principal Performance: A Review of the Validity and Reliability of Publicly Accessible Measures*. American Institute of Research, www.air.org.

Gangi, T.A. (2009). *School climate and faculty relationships: Choosing an effective assessment measure*. Doctoral Dissertation, School Psychology Program, St. John's University, New York.

Guo,P. Choe, J., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2011). *Report of Construct Validity and Internal Consistency Findings for the Comprehensive School Climate Inventory*. Fordham University. Unpublished paper.

Haggerty, K., Elgin, J. & Woolley, A. (2010). *Social-Emotional Learning Assessment Measures for Middle School Youth*. Social development Research Group, University of Washington. Supported by the Raikes Foundation. July 30, 2010.

Contact Information:

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