

2022 VIRGINIA SCHOOL SURVEY OF CLIMATE AND WORKING CONDITIONS Executive Summary

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2022 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions – Executive Summary

The 2022 Virginia School Survey of Climate and Working Conditions (the Virginia School Survey) was administered from January through March 2022 to students, classroom instructors, and staff in all Virginia public schools serving students in grades 9–12. The Virginia School Survey represents a collaboration between the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) to reduce school divisions' survey administration burden while fulfilling legislative mandates.¹

Local results from the Virginia School Survey are shared with participating schools and divisions to provide actionable information to division leaders and school administration that enables a safe, healthy, and positive school and work environment for all students and staff. The findings discussed below focus primarily on school climate for students, perceptions of safety, and experiences around bullying; see the [VDOE website](#) for additional findings on classroom instructor and staff working conditions. Nearly all eligible schools (over 99.5%) participated in the 2022 survey administration, with response rates above 62% for students and classroom instructors.

Survey Participation and Demographics

Student

- Nearly all eligible schools (99.4%) participated in the student survey. There were 219,233 student responses, representing a response rate of 63.2% among 9th through 12th grade students.
- The racial and ethnic demographics of student respondents were as follows:

Race/Ethnicity Response	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,113	0.5%
Asian	16,612	7.6%
Black or African American	35,991	16.4%
Hispanic or Latino	40,952	18.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	485	0.2%
White	95,875	43.7%
Other Race	5,906	2.7%
More than one race	21,729	9.9%
No answer	570	0.3%
Total	219,233	100.0%

- Just under half (45.0%) of student respondents identified as female, 46.1% identified as male, 3.6% identified as non-binary, 4.9% preferred not to disclose their gender, and .05% gave no response.

¹ Legislative mandates fulfilled through the streamlined survey include the legislative mandate for DCJS to conduct a secondary school (grades 6–12) climate survey and VDOE's legislative mandate to conduct a working conditions survey of all licensed school personnel.

Classroom Instructor

- Most eligible schools (95.5%) participated in the Classroom Instructor Survey. There were 20,048 classroom instructor responses, representing a response rate of 63.2% among teachers and teachers' aides.
- The racial and ethnic demographics of classroom instructors were as follows:

Race/Ethnicity Response	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	45	0.2%
Asian	428	2.1%
Black or African American	2,095	10.4%
Hispanic or Latino	929	4.6%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	22	0.1%
White	14,961	74.6%
Other Race	742	3.7%
Two or More Races	826	4.1%
Total	20,048	100.0%

- Fifty-nine percent (59.5%) of classroom instructors identified as female, 30.3% identified as male, 0.4% identified as non-binary, and 9.1% preferred not to disclose their gender.

Staff

- Nearly 98 percent (97.7%) of eligible schools participated in the Staff Survey. There were 6,104 staff responses, representing a response rate of 37.3% among other licensed and non-licensed individuals.
- The racial and ethnic demographics of staff respondents was:

Race/Ethnicity Response	Count	Percentage
American Indian or Alaska Native	20	0.3%
Asian	83	1.4%
Black or African American	1,093	17.9%
Hispanic or Latino	371	6.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	10	0.2%
White	4,049	66.3%
Other Race	194	3.2%
Two or More Races	152	2.5%
Total	20,048	100.0%

- Sixty-nine percent (69.6%) of staff respondents identified as female, 21.9% identified as male, 0.2% identified as non-binary, and 8.1% preferred not to disclose their gender.

Climate/Atmosphere

The School Climate Survey assesses climate through a number of measures and also asks one global question about Climate for students and Working Conditions for Teachers and Staff.

Student

- Sixty-three percent (63.4%) of students participating rated the atmosphere of their school between *slightly positive* and *very positive*.
- Comparatively, among student respondents, 68.7% of males, 61.1% of females, 43.4% of non-binary students, and 50.1% of those who preferred not to disclose their gender rated the atmosphere between *slightly* and *very positive*.
- Comparatively, of student respondents, 54.9% of American Indian or Alaska Native, 76.6% of Asian, 58.7% of Black or African American, 65.3% of Hispanic or Latino, 61.0% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, 57.9% of Two or More Races, 63.7% of White, and 58.9% of Other rated the atmosphere between *slightly* and *very positive*.
- Students who attended the school the previous year (n= 145,285 students) were asked about the change in school climate. A total of 61,842 (42.6%) students stated that school climate has stayed about the same compared to previous years. Nearly a third of the returning students (31.3%, n= 45,456) stated that school climate has become *slightly to much worse*, whereas 26.2% (30,987 student) stated school climate has become *slightly to much better*.

Classroom Instructor

- Just over 40 percent of instructors (41.1%, n= 8253) stated that school climate for students has become *slightly to much worse*, 25.3% (n= 5,061 instructors) stated school climate for students has become *slightly to much better*, 22.9% (n= 4,583 instructors) stated school climate for students has *stayed about the same*, and 10.7% (n= 2,151 instructors) had *no opinion*.

Staff

- Overall, 32.4% or 1,797 staff stated school climate for students has become *slightly to much better* and 28.2% (1,393 staff) had no opinion.

Student Mental Health

- Nearly a third of students (31.9%) reported experiencing anxiety more than half of the days in the past two weeks, and 26.8% of students reported experiencing signs of depression more than half of the days in the past two weeks.
- Within the past 12 months, 12.7% of students (n= 27,946) seriously considered suicide. When disaggregated by gender, 13.8% of female students, 8.3% of male students, 41.2% of non-binary students, and 23.4% among those who preferred not to disclose their gender. When disaggregated by race, 17.0% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 9.3% of Asian students, 12.0% of Black or African American students, 13.7% of Hispanic or Latino students, 17.3% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 16.7% of those students reporting Two or More Races, 12.3% of White students, and 12.3% of those students who reported an Other race seriously considered suicide in the past 12 months.

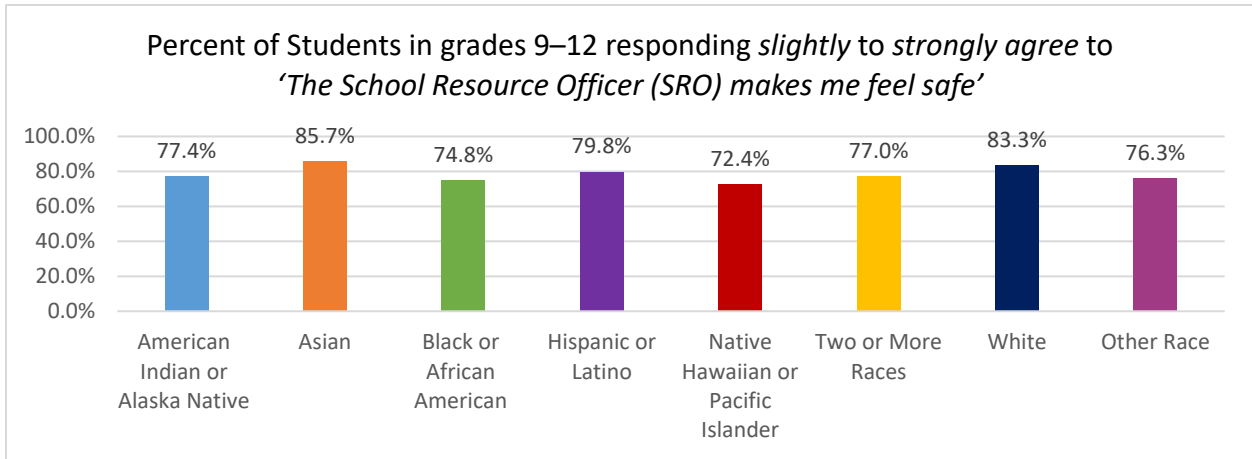
- A total of 67,409 students (30.7%) reported problematic depressive thoughts, feelings, or behaviors within the past 12 months. Over half (53%) of students said they had an adult in their life that they could turn to for help, and 75.1% of students statewide said they would tell a trusted adult if a friend were having mental health struggles.

Security Personnel

Participants are asked about their perception of having a School Resource Officer and/or a School Security Officer in their building. These questions are all rated on a six-point scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree).

Student

- Over two-thirds of students (68.4%) reported their school had a School Resource Officer (SRO). These 149,925 students were then asked to respond to the statement “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes me feel safe,*” where 80.7% scored this between *slightly to strongly agreed*. This is represented by 77.4% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 85.7% of Asian students, 74.8% of Black or African American students, 79.8% of Hispanic or Latino students, 72.4% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 77.0% of students who reported Two or More Races, 83.3% of White students, and 76.3% of students who reported an Other race.
- Among the students that reported having an SRO in their building, 84.3% of students *slightly to strongly agreed* that “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to our school.*” This is represented by 81.0% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 87.9% of Asian students, 80.3% of Black or African American students, 83.1% of Hispanic or Latino students, 74.9% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 81.5% of students who reported Two or More Races, 86.2% of White students, and 80.6% of students who reported an Other race.
- A quarter (25.7%) of students that reported not having an SRO in their building ($n= 68,848$) stated that they would feel safer if there was one whereas 60.1% stated they did not know if they would feel safer with an SRO.
- Over half of students (55.6%) reported their school had a School Security Officer (SSO). These 121,871 students were then asked to respond to the statement “*The School Security Officer (SSO) makes me feel safe,*” where 81.4% scored this between *slightly to strongly agreed*. This is represented by 79.6% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 88.4% of Asian students, 75.7% of Black or African American students, 80.8% of Hispanic or Latino students, 71.5% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 77.4% of students who reported Two or More Races, 84.1% of White students, and 78.3% of students who reported an “Other” race.
- Among the students that reported having an SSO in their building, 84.3% of students responded between *slightly to strongly agree* to the statement, “*The School Security Officer (SSO) makes a positive contribution to our school.*” This is represented by 82.6% of American Indian or Alaska Native students, 90.2% of Asian students, 80.7% of Black or African American students, 83.5% of Hispanic or Latino students, 73.0% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander students, 81.8% of students who reported Two or More Races, 86.7% of White students, and 81.8% of students who reported an Other race.
- Just over a quarter (26.2%) of students that reported not having an SSO in their building ($n= 97,300$) stated that they would feel safer if there was one whereas 58.9% stated they did not know if they would feel safer with an SSO.



Classroom Instructor

- Nearly 90 percent (88.9%) of classroom instructors reported their school had a School Resource Officer (SRO). These 17,828 classroom instructors were then asked to respond to the statement “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes me feel safe,*” and 86.7% of instructors indicated slight to strong agreement (86.8% of American Indian or Alaska Native instructors, 91.5% of Asian instructors, 86.4% of Black or African American instructors, 86.6% of Hispanic or Latino instructors, 88.9% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander instructors, 83.4% of instructors who reported Two or More Races, 87.0% of White instructors, and 84.9% of instructors who indicated their race was Other).
- These same classroom instructors were asked to respond to the statement “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to our school,*” and 89.2% of instructors *slightly to strongly agreed* (92.0% of American Indian or Alaska Native instructors, 92.9% of Asian instructors, 89.2% of Black or African American instructors, 89.4% of Hispanic or Latino instructors, 88.9% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander instructors, 87.4% of instructors who reported Two or More Races, 89.1% of White instructors, and 89.0% of instructors who indicated their race was Other).
- Just over half (51.6%) of classroom instructors that reported not having an SRO in their building ($n=2,213$) stated that they would feel safer if there was an SRO.
- Over 60 percent (60.1%) of classroom instructors reported their school had a School Security Officer (SSO). These 15,890 classroom instructors were then asked to respond to the statement “*The School Security Officer (SSO) makes me feel safe,*” and 84.8% indicated *slight to strong agreement* (74.2% of American Indian or Alaska Native instructors, 92.4% of Asian instructors, 86.6% of Black or African American instructors, 85.3% of Hispanic or Latino instructors, 80.0% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander instructors, 82.2% of instructors who reported Two or More Races, 84.4% of White instructors, and 81.9% of those who reported their race was Other).
- These same classroom instructors were asked to respond to the statement “*The School Security Officer (SSO) makes a positive contribution to our school,*” and 89.6% of instructors *slightly to strongly agreed* (93.6% of American Indian or Alaska Native instructors, 93.4% of Asian instructors, 91.1% of Black or African American instructors, 89.6% of Hispanic or Latino instructors, 86.6% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander instructors, 88.5% of instructors who reported Two or More Races, 89.5% of White instructors, and 89.0% of instructors who indicated their race was “Other”).

- Over a quarter (29.8%) of classroom instructors that reported not having an SSO in their building ($n=7,984$) stated that they would feel safer if there was an SSO; while 49.0% stated they did not know if they would feel safer with an SSO.

Staff

- Nearly 90 percent (88.4%) of staff reported their school had a School Resource Officer (SRO). These staff were then asked to respond to the statement “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes me feel safe,*” and 90.8% of staff indicated slight to strong agreement (92.8% of American Indian or Alaska Native staff, 92.8% of Asian staff, 89.6% of Black or African American staff, 90.4% of Hispanic or Latino staff, 88.8% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander staff, 89.5% of staff who reported Two or More Races, 91.5% of White staff, and 83.4% of staff who indicated their race was Other).
- These same staff members were asked to respond to the statement “*The School Resource Officer (SRO) makes a positive contribution to our school,*” and 92.1% of staff *slightly to strongly agreed* (92.8% of American Indian or Alaska Native staff, 93.5% of Asian staff, 92.3% of Black or African American staff, 91.5% of Hispanic or Latino staff, 88.8% of Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander staff, 92.2% of staff who reported Two or More Races, 92.2% of White staff, and 88.0% of staff who indicated their race was Other).
- Just over half (54.6%) of classroom instructors that reported not having an SRO in their building ($n=709$) stated that they would feel safer if there was an SRO.

Bullying

Student

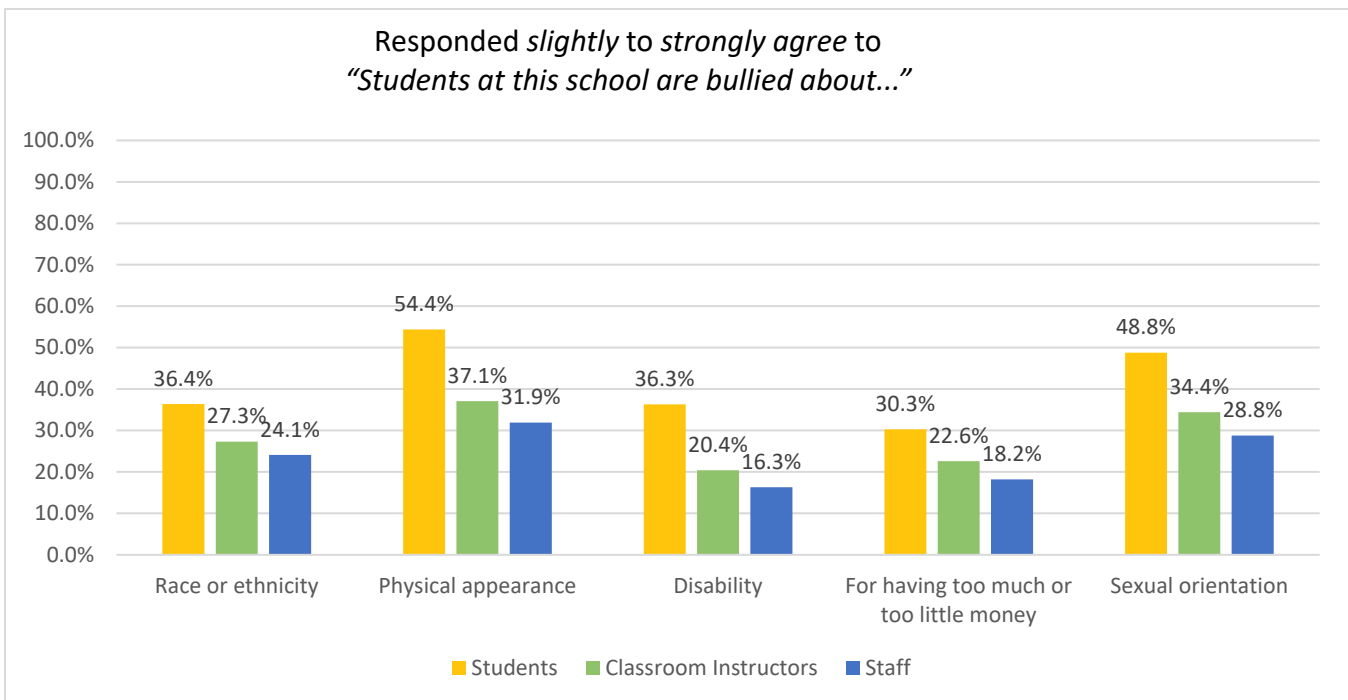
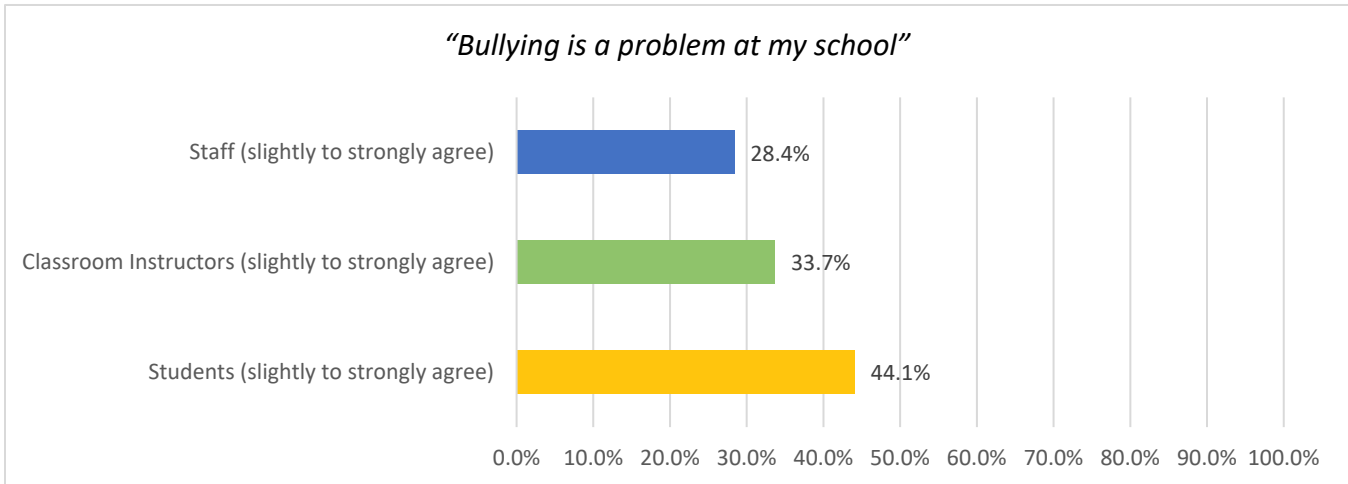
- Bullying was reported as a problem in schools by 44.1% of students. When asked about the reasons students are bullied at school, students reported the following between *slightly* and *strongly agree*; 36.4% reported that students are bullied due to their race or ethnicity; 54.4% reported that students are bullied about their physical appearance; 36.3% reported that students are bullied about their disability; 30.3% reported that students are bullied for having too much or too little money; and 48.8% reported that students are bullied about their sexual orientation.
- Somewhat more than half of students (55%) *slightly to strongly agreed* that adults take action to address bullying.

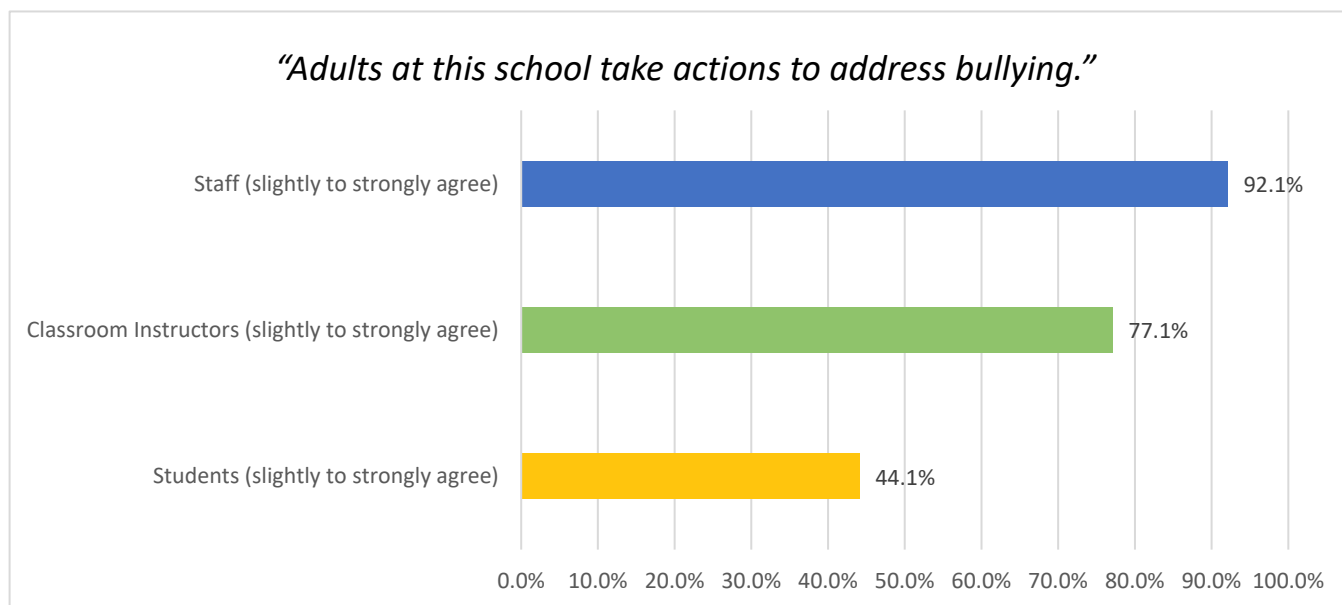
Classroom Instructor

- Bullying was seen as a problem in schools by 33.7% of classroom instructors. When asked about the reasons students are bullied at school, 27.3% of classroom instructors reported that students are bullied due to their race or ethnicity; 37.1% reported that students are bullied about their physical appearance; 20.4% reported that students are bullied about their disability; 22.6% reported students are bullied for having too much or too little money, and 34.4% *slightly to strongly agreed* that students are bullied about their sexual orientation.
- Most classroom instructors (77.1%) *slightly to strongly agreed* that adults take action to address bullying.

Staff

- Bullying was seen as a problem in schools by 28.4% of staff. When asked about the reasons students are bullied at school, 24.1% of staff reported that students are bullied due to their race or ethnicity; 31.9% reported that students are bullied about their physical appearance; 16.3% reported they strongly agreed that students are bullied about their disability; 18.2% reported students are bullied for having too much or too little money, and 28.8% *slightly to strongly agreed* that students are bullied about their sexual orientation.
- The majority of staff (92.1%) *slightly to strongly agreed* that adults take action to address bullying.





Relationships and Safety

Student

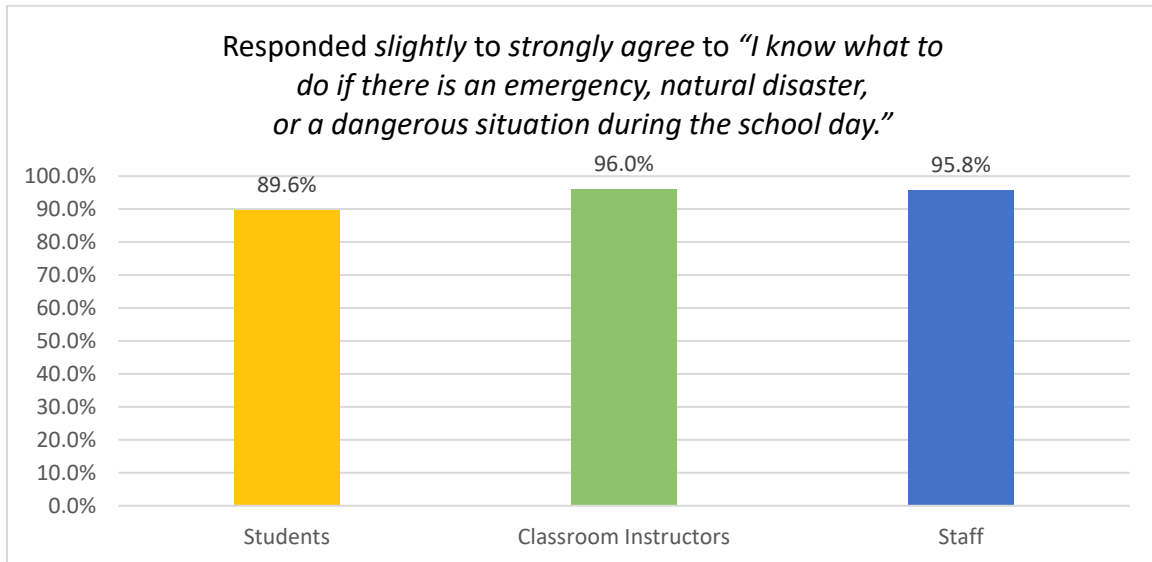
- One measure on the survey assesses the relationship between students and adults in their schools, with questions such as *“Adults at this school care about me,” “Adults at this school want me to do well,”* and *“I respect the adults at this school.”* A total of 83.9% of students reported between *slightly* and *strongly agree* on questions about the positive nature of the relationship between students and adults.
- Students generally feel positive about the safety of their schools with 88.3% *slightly to strongly agreeing* with the series of questions about safety (e.g., *“I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school,”* and *“I feel safe in my classes”*).
- The survey asked students about the extent to which they agreed with a variety of crisis preparation and management strategies; 86.4% of students responded to questions in this domain between *slightly* and *strongly agree*. Similarly, we asked students if they knew that their school used a team approach to threat assessment, and 38.7% of students answered “yes.”

Classroom Instructor

- Classroom instructors were asked to assess the positive nature of the relationship between students and adults in their schools, and 93.1% reported between *slightly* and *strongly agree* on the questions about those relationships.
- Classroom instructors were asked about the safety and crisis preparedness in their school (e.g., *“I feel safe at this school”* and *“I have been adequately informed about the threat assessment process in my building”*), and 88.3% responded between *slightly to strongly agree* to those questions.

Staff

- Staff were asked to assess the positive nature of the relationship between students and adults in their schools, and 92.4% responded between *slightly* and *strongly agree* on the questions about those relationships.
- Classroom instructors were asked about the safety and crisis preparedness in their school (e.g., “*I feel safe at this school*” and “*I have been adequately informed about the threat assessment process in my building*”), and 90.8% rated between *slightly* to *strongly agree* to those questions.



Plans for 2023

DCJS and VDOE will administer the Virginia School Survey during the 2022–2023 school year, focusing on school climate among middle school students (grades 6–8) and working conditions among elementary and middle school classroom instructors and staff. DCJS and VDOE will continue to improve the survey administration experience for schools, based on lessons learned from the 2022 administration, and revise survey items as needed to improve the psychometric properties and actionable information derived.

Legislative Authority for Survey

Prior to the 2020–2021 school year, DCJS administered a school climate survey and VDOE administered a working conditions survey in response to separate legislative mandates.² In 2019, the Governor’s Children’s Cabinet’s Student Safety Workgroup endorsed a recommendation³ authorizing DCJS to conduct an annual school climate survey of students and staff in secondary schools (grades 6–12) in consultation with VDOE and the Department of

² The VDOE Teacher and Staff Working Conditions Survey is required by [Item 143.G of the 2020 Appropriation Act](#); and the DCJS Secondary School Climate Survey is required by the [Code of Virginia § 22.1-279.8.B](#).

³ www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/childrens-cabinet/Final-Recommendations-Student-Safety-Work-Group.pdf Recommendation 2c.

Behavioral Health and Developmental Services. In the same year, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that modified the *Code of Virginia*⁴ requiring the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify and then consolidate, to the extent possible, all surveys and questionnaires of schools. Both efforts intended to reduce survey burden on schools and eliminate duplicative efforts while providing statewide data to address school climate and working conditions issues.

To fulfill this intent, DCJS and VDOE began planning a consolidated survey effort in 2020 with the goal of combining each agency's required survey efforts into a single survey instrument and administration cycle. This effort is supported by a DCJS contract for survey administration with Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

Notes on Administration

Results from the Virginia School Survey are intended to assist school and division personnel in understanding how connected students feel to their school, the quality of their relationships with other students and classroom instructors, and their feelings of safety. For classroom instructors and staff, the survey provides insights on their perceptions of the learning environment, support for their professional role, and with whom they collaborate to serve students well. The survey is not intended to be evaluative but may be useful for understanding areas of strength and opportunity, as well as points of accomplishment, within school buildings.

Reports summarizing state-level results by item for students, classroom instructors, and staff are available on the DCJS and VDOE websites through the links below:

- DCJS link- <https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/virginia-center-school-and-campus-safety/school-safety-survey/secondary-school-climate-survey>
- VDOE link- <https://www.doe.virginia.gov/programs-services/school-operations-support-services/school-climate-working-conditions>

⁴ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/22.1-23.2>