

## National Center for School Engagement Policy and Practice Assessment

The National Center for School Engagement Policy and Practice Assessment is designed to help school teams assess the extent to which school level practice fosters school engagement and completion and is aligned with policy set by the school district, school administration or classroom teachers. Ultimately, these data help to illuminate critical factors that contribute to whether or not students are engaged and connected to their school community—and whether there are policies in place that intentionally foster or unintentionally undermine student attendance, attachment and achievement. There are three versions of the assessment tool, one each for high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. There are thirteen sections to the survey, one for each of the following categories of questions, which appear in alphabetical order.

Absences	Disengaged Students	Supportive Services
Academic support	Enrollment, Transfers, Credits	Teachers
Bullying	Grading Practices	Transition support
Class levels	School climate	
Discipline	Student Activities	

Generally, each school, or a large number of schools in a district will participate in the assessment. The most effective way to complete the survey is for each school to assemble a team of three to four people including the principal and at least one lead teacher to discuss the questions and arrive at *consensus* regarding the appropriate answers. Each school submits one, and only one, survey. Each substantive question about a practice at your school is followed by a question that asks about the origin of that practice. Is it in accordance with a policy set by the school district, by the school or by teachers? Or perhaps it does not reflect a policy at all, but just the culture or common practice at the school.

There are two valuable aspects to the work. The first is the discussion among school team members that is required in order to reach consensus on the answers to the survey questions. It is important, therefore, to have individuals who represent a wide spectrum of views contribute to the process. It will become apparent if there are areas in which a common understanding of policy and/or practice is lacking, allowing school staffs to clarify and even rethink the school's approach. The second is the analysis that the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) will provide regarding your school and district policies. NCSE will report your school's answers to each question, compared to the aggregate answers provided by all schools in your district. NCSE will also provide an assessment of overall strengths and recommendations for improvement for each school. For the district, NCSE will indicate items for which there appears to be a lack of understanding of district policy among schools and areas in which district policy could be enhanced to promote the Three As of School Engagement – Attendance, Attachment and Achievement.

To learn more about the assessment, contact:

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# NCSE AAA Policy & Practice Assessment: High School Level

## Purpose

The following tool is designed to help school teams assess the extent to which school level practice is aligned with policy set by the school district, school administration or classroom teachers. Ultimately, these data help to illuminate many critical factors involved in whether or not students are engaged and connected to their school community—and whether there are policies in place that intentionally foster or unintentionally undermine student attendance, attachment and achievement.

There are 13 sections to this survey, one for each of the following categories of questions, which appear in alphabetical order:

- Academic Support
- Attendance
- Bullying
- Class Levels
- Discipline
- Disengaged Students
- Enrollment, Transfers and Credits
- Grading Practices
- School Climate
- Student Activities
- Supportive Services
- Teachers
- Transition Support

# NCSE AAA Policy & Practice Assessment: High School Level

## Directions - PLEASE READ!

The most effective way to take this survey is to ASSEMBLE A TEAM OF 3 TO 5 PEOPLE INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL AND AT LEAST ONE LEAD TEACHER to discuss the questions and arrive at consensus regarding the appropriate answers. The best team is one that brings a variety of perspectives. You might consider including staff members of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, or different lengths of service in your school, for example.

ONLY ONE SURVEY SHOULD BE SUBMITTED PER SCHOOL.

Each substantive question about a practice at your school is followed by a question that asks about the origin of that practice. Is it in accordance with a policy set by the school district, by the school or by teachers? Or perhaps it does not reflect a policy at all, but just the culture or common practice at your school. The last question in each section is a text box that gives you the opportunity to tell us about any question whose response choices do not apply well to your school. Answering this question will help us conduct our assessment of your school and the other schools in your district, as well as improve our tool for future use with other school districts.

For any school we expect a range of responses. No school will have in place every beneficial practice included in this survey, or be implementing every policy consistently.

THERE ARE TWO VALUABLE ASPECTS OF THIS WORK. The first is the DISCUSSION AMONG SCHOOL TEAM MEMBERS that is required in order to complete this survey. It is important, therefore, to have individuals who represent a wide spectrum of views contribute to this process. The second is THE ANALYSIS THAT THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT WILL PROVIDE of your school policies and the policies. The more thoughtful your answers, the more valuable the work will be to you.

Please ALLOW 2 TO 3 HOURS TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. You may find it easier to complete the survey as a team on paper, then enter it quickly into the computer. IF YOU LOG OFF THE ELECTRONIC SURVEY MIDWAY, YOU WILL BE SENT BACK TO THE BEGINNING WHEN YOU RETURN. If this happens, reenter your school name, then pick up where you left off. You may move back and forth between pages at any time.

Thank you for your cooperation!

## Background

**\*1. School name**

**\*2. School district**

**\*3. State**

State:

**\*4. Our school is best described as a/an:**

- Elementary School
- Comprehensive Middle School
- Alternative Middle School
- Comprehensive High School
- Alternative High School
- Combined Elementary/Middle School
- Combined Middle/High School
- K-12 School

## 1) Academic Support

### 1. Is a monitored study period available as a class? (Check all that apply.)

- Yes, required for all or almost all students
- Yes, required for a particular grade
- Yes, required for struggling students
- Yes, available to all who sign up, but not required
- Yes, but they fill up so not all students who want one can have one
- Available for struggling students only
- No, we do not have these

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. If students have a study period, do they have access to their teachers during this time?

- Not applicable/No study period
- Generally yes
- Generally no
- Only if a teacher's schedule happens to coincide

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- Not applicable/No study period
- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## 2) Attendance

### 1. Must students show a school ID to enter the building?

- No.
- Yes, but we give them free temporary IDs if they forget.
- Yes, but they can purchase temporary IDs if they forget.
- Yes, and they must find their ID before they can enter the building even if they must go home to get it.

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Once they are in the building, must students show a school ID to enter each class?

- No.
- Yes, but we give them a temporary ID on the spot if they forget.
- Yes, and they must go to a designated location in the building to get a temporary ID.

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 5. How, if at all, do unexcused absences affect a student's final class grade **INDEPENDENTLY** of the quality of his/her work?

- They have no effect
- Above a fixed number, (e.g. 5 or 6), students receive an F unless they follow procedures to regain credit
- Above a fixed number, (e.g. 5 or 6), students receive an F and there is no possibility of regaining credit
- Teachers decide and there is little consistency

## 3) Bullying

### 1. Which of the following issues are explicitly covered by your school's anti-bullying policy? (Check all that apply.)

	We have no policy on this	We have a policy but it is unevenly enforced	We have a well-enforced policy
Physical bullying on school property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physical bullying among students off school property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verbal bullying on school property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Verbal bullying among students off school property	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cyber-bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Are common locations and times for bullying identified and monitored?

- Yes, using a systematic approach
- Yes, but informally
- Not usually
- No

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 5. Are students allowed to change their schedule or switch classes to avoid bullying?

- Yes, whenever bullying occurs repeatedly
- On special occasions arranged with counselor subject to principal approval, etc.
- No

## 4) Class Levels

### 1. Are core classes available at different levels of challenge?

- All or almost all are
- Most are
- Some are
- None or almost none are

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Are students able to move down a level mid-semester if a class turns out to be too hard?

- Always or almost always
- Usually
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never or almost never
- N/A No different levels

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here



## 5) Discipline

**1. When students are absent from class due to suspension, are these absences excused or unexcused?**

- Excused
- Unexcused
- It depends on how many suspensions the student has had

**2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)**

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

**3. When students are suspended, where do they go? (Check all that apply.)**

- Monitored, in-school suspension program
- Monitored, out-of-school suspension program or center
- Unmonitored, out-of-school suspension/They stay home or go where they want

**4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)**

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

**5. For which of these offenses may a student be assigned to in-school suspension? \*\*IF YOU HAVE NO IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAM SKIP TO QUESTION # 13.\*\***

	Yes	Sometimes	No
Being rude to staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Disrupting a classroom	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dress code violations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Failure to complete assignments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Physically harming another student or staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Threatening another student or staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Truancy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vulgarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 6) Disengaged Students

### 1. Are struggling students advised to seek a GED?

- Sometimes, if they are not a fit for our school.
- Not if they are still enrolled, but neither do we counsel potential dropouts on the difference between a GED and a high school diploma.
- No, and we actively counsel potential dropouts on the difference between a GED and a high school diploma.

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. What is your response to a student, UNDER the age of compulsory attendance, who indicates he/she intends to drop out of school? (Check all that apply.)

- Counsel him/her about alternative schools
- Counsel him/her about alternatives within this school, e.g. part time, credit recovery etc.
- Counsel student to re-engage him/her
- Counsel him/her about legal requirement to attend school
- Warn that legal action will be taken
- Other (please specify)

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## 7) Enrollment, Transfers and Credits

### 1. Can students who enroll in the middle or late in a semester earn credit for demonstrating mastery of the course material?

- Yes, we do this.
- No, we have no system for assessing mastery in these cases.
- No, we do not do this.

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. What do you consider to be sufficient notification of a child's transfer to another school, needing no additional follow-up? (Check each method that applies.)

- We receive a transcript request from another school.
- We verify with the new school that the student has transferred
- The student submits a form stating intent to transfer.
- The parent submits a form stating the student's intent to transfer.
- We hear from friends or neighbors that the student has transferred.
- The student ceases to attend for a certain period of time.
- Other (please specify)

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## 8) Grading Practices

### 1. Can a teacher give an “Incomplete” for a course rather than an “F”?

- Yes, our teachers frequently do this
- Yes, but our teachers rarely do this
- Yes, under special circumstances
- No

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Can students turn in late homework (regardless of whether they were absent) and receive credit?

- Yes, full credit at any point in the semester.
- Yes, full credit for a limited period of time.
- Yes, partial credit at any point in the semester.
- Yes, partial credit for a limited period of time.
- Sometimes.
- Rarely.
- Never or almost never.
- Teachers decide and there is no consistency.

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## 9) School Climate

### 1. Do you have an open campus, and if so, are students monitored as they leave?

- Open for all students, effective monitoring
- Open for all students, no or ineffective monitoring
- Open for some students, effective monitoring
- Open for some students, no or ineffective monitoring
- No open campus, effective monitoring
- No open campus, no or ineffective monitoring

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Do you survey students to measure school climate at your school?

- Yes, at least annually
- Yes, every few years
- We have done it, but not on a regular basis
- We have not done it, but have concrete plans to do it this year
- We have never measured school climate

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## 10) Student Activities

**1. Are fees charged to the student to participate in extra-curricular activities? If yes, are they routinely waived based on need?**

- No, there are never or rarely fees
- Yes, fees are routinely charged and rarely waived
- There are fees and they can be waived based on need

**2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)**

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

**3. Are afterschool programs allowed to use the building during non-school hours?**

- Yes, always or almost always
- Sometimes depending on the program
- Sometimes depending on available space
- In theory, but it rarely works out
- No, it is not allowed

**4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)**

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

**5. Is there a “late bus” or other transportation provided to students who want to participate in afterschool activities?**

- Yes, it is available to all our students
- Yes, but it does not serve all the areas in which our students live
- No

## 11) Supportive Services

### 1. Are students allowed to arrange classes to accommodate work schedules?

- Yes, we work to make this possible for our students
- Yes, they are allowed to, but it doesn't work out very often
- Only under special circumstances
- No, this is not allowed

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Are students allowed to arrive late or leave early to take care of younger siblings?

- Yes, we work to make this possible for our students
- Yes, they are allowed to, but it doesn't work out very often
- Only under special circumstances
- No, this is not allowed

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 5. Are students allowed to take a partial course load due to life circumstances?

- Yes, we work to make this possible for our students
- Yes, they are allowed to, but it doesn't work out very often
- Only under special circumstances
- No

## 12) Teachers

You are almost done!

### 1. Do teachers have hallway duties during passing periods?

- Yes, we have systematic hallway monitoring by teachers
- Yes, it is common, but not systematically organized
- Sometimes
- Infrequently or never

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Do teachers frequently greet students by name?

- Most or all teachers do
- Many teachers do
- Some teachers do
- Only a few teachers do

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 5. Do teachers make themselves available to students after the school day ends?

- Most or all teachers do
- Many teachers do
- Some teachers do
- Only a few teachers do



## 13) Transition Support

This is your last section!

### 1. Does the new entering class visit your school before the start of their first year in your school?

- Visits are scheduled for all students
- Visits are scheduled for most students
- Visits are possible, but few students do them
- No, visits are generally not scheduled

### 2. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

### 3. Do transfer students visit your school before they start classes?

- Visits are scheduled for all transfer students
- Visits are scheduled for students who transfer at the start of the school year
- Visits are scheduled for all transfer students regardless of when they transfer to our school
- Visits are possible, but few transfer students do them
- No, visits are generally not scheduled

### 4. Your answer to the above question represents... (Check all that apply.)

- A district mandate
- School policy
- Teacher decision
- Just the way things are done here

## **Congratulations!**

You have completed your portion of the National Center for School Engagement's School Level Policy Assessment. Thank you for your hard work. We will conduct our assessment as soon as possible and get the results back to you promptly. We hope this work will be useful to you as you seek to improve Attendance, Attachment and Achievement and become a Triple A School.

**Good-bye!**