

Data Interpretation Topical Discussion Guide

Interpreting Emergency Readiness & Management School Climate Survey Data

Introduction

This *Discussion Guide* provides suggestions to help you use your school climate data to make meaningful interpretations about the topic of Emergency Readiness and Management within your state, district, or school, taking into account the viewpoints of the people who took the survey in your state, district, or school (i.e., students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, parents/guardians).¹ It accompanies the School Climate Improvement Resource Package (SCIRP) [Data Interpretation Guide](#), which contains information, support, and resources to help you interpret and use your survey results, using the U.S. Department of Education (ED) School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) [model](#) of school climate domains and topic areas as a framework. We encourage you to read the full [Data Interpretation Guide](#), another resource within the SCIRP, before using this *Discussion Guide* so that you have a better understanding of the model and types of results you will see.


This document is intended for use by EDSCLS users as well as users of other school climate surveys, which often include a topic area similar in composition to the Emergency Readiness and Management topic area in the EDSCLS. Directions specific to EDSCLS users are denoted in this guide with the EDSCLS logo (right).



This guide, along with the [Data Interpretation Guide](#), can help you to derive meaning from your state's, district's, or school's Emergency Readiness and Management results, which you can use to identify areas for improvement.² In the following sections, you will find:

- A definition of emergency readiness and management as it relates to school climate
- Guiding questions to help you think through your Emergency Readiness and Management data from a multi-tiered perspective—universal and targeted (Click on the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) and the [Reference Manual](#) to find additional information on multi-tiered approaches.)
- Guiding questions organized by data types (average [mean] Emergency Readiness and Management values and item-level Emergency Readiness and Management data):
 - Guiding questions about emergency readiness and management for **districts** using average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values ([Appendix A](#))
 - Guiding questions about emergency readiness and management for **schools** using average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values ([Appendix B](#))

¹ This document provides strategies applicable to traditional schools and districts, as well as charter authorizers, charter management organizations, education management organizations, individual charter schools, charter local education agencies, and private schools.

²  States that host the EDSCLS can use the same suggestions as given for districts; states also will be able to compare data across their districts, as well as across their schools.

- A link to an [Emergency Readiness and Management](#) webpage that includes interventions that districts and schools can implement immediately to address specific areas of need as well as longer term resources for improving emergency readiness and management



Schools and districts also are required to report information about school climate, including emergency readiness and management, pursuant to ED’s Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC). Information collected by EDSCLS or other similar surveys may help schools and districts prepare their responses to the CRDC survey. More information about the CRDC can be found at ocrdata.ed.gov.

What Is Emergency Readiness and Management?

For the purposes of interpreting data, we have defined *emergency readiness* and management as establishing a foundation of positive relationships and systems that can help staff and students better face the challenges of managing during an emergency, as well as the resilience to overcome the challenges emergencies present. Emergencies include violence, crime, natural disasters, epidemics, and accidents.

You can find a brief overview of emergency readiness and management as it relates to school climate [here](#).

Guidance for Districts and Schools

1. Examining Emergency Readiness and Management Data Overall: Focus on a Universal Approach



The EDSCLS Emergency Readiness and Management items were not designed to produce scale scores. However, you can use average (mean) topic area values to focus on a universal approach to improving emergency readiness and management. As described in the [Data Interpretation Guide](#), average (mean) topic area values can be used to gauge how favorably respondents perceive the topic.³

After you have these data for your district’s or school’s students and staff, and you have read the [Data Interpretation Guide](#), you can use guiding questions in Appendix A (for districts) and in Appendix B (for schools) to help make meaningful interpretations of your results.



If you are a **district**, click on [Appendix A](#) to go to guiding questions for overall average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values.



If you are a **school**, click on [Appendix B](#) to go to guiding questions for overall average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values.

³



Average (mean) topic area values are not directly available from the EDSCLS platform but can be calculated from raw survey data. See [Appendix C](#) in the *Data Interpretation Guide* for information about calculating, using, and interpreting average (mean) topic area values.

2. Examining Emergency Readiness and Management Data Across Student and Staff Respondent Characteristics: Focus on a Targeted Approach

Mean (average) Emergency Readiness and Management values broken out by respondent characteristics provide a richer set of data and a way to see how perceptions of emergency readiness and management differ across subgroups of students and staff.



Data are produced for EDSCLS users for the following subgroups.⁴

- Student data per topic area can be examined by:
 - Gender,
 - Race/ethnicity, and
 - Grade.
- Staff (instructional and noninstructional) data per topic area can be examined by:
 - Gender,
 - Race/ethnicity.



Note: In the event of a possible disclosure risk that would allow a respondent or small subgroup of respondents to be identified (e.g., if there is only one Asian teacher in the school), the EDSCLS platform will suppress the results for that subgroup (i.e., results for that subgroup will not be shown). (To understand how a small subgroup may perceive school climate, see the [Reference Manual](#) for tips on conducting interviews and focus groups.)

Examining student and staff perceptions of emergency readiness and management in your district or school by respondent characteristics can be extremely useful, not only in understanding the areas of strength and weakness in your school environment but also in targeting improvement efforts. For example, if perceptions of emergency readiness and management differ by student characteristics (gender, race/ethnicity, grade), then this will help you highlight areas of targeted need.

Supports should be designed to improve school climate for the students who are most in need regardless of the subgroup(s) to which they belong. Targeting supports based on need as opposed to membership in a subgroup will support compliance with relevant civil rights laws.



If you are a **district**, click on [Appendix A](#) to go to guiding questions for average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics**.



If you are a **school**, click on [Appendix B](#) to go to guiding questions for average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics**.



WHAT ABOUT EXAMINING SURVEY RESULTS BY PARENT/GUARDIAN CHARACTERISTICS?

Because of the brevity of the parent/guardian survey, the EDSCLS was not designed to produce scale scores or average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values for parents; however, parent results can be examined at the item level, which is discussed in the section [Digging Deeper Into the Data by Using Item-Level Data](#).

⁴ Note that the EDSCLS platform does not produce crossed demographics (e.g., Asian females). Users can obtain crossed demographics analytically by downloading the raw data file. Also, while Emergency Readiness and Management is shown as one of the topic areas within the Safety domain, it was not designed to form a scale.

3. Digging Deeper Into the Data by Using Item-Level Data: Focus on a Targeted Approach



After you have examined your average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values, if you wish to use them, looking at item-level data may help you dig deeper to target specific areas or issues. (See the *Data Interpretation Guide* to learn more about examining [item-level data](#).) Item-level results often can provide districts and schools with concrete information on emergency readiness and management that may be more actionable, warranting more immediate implementation of interventions found on the [Emergency Readiness and Management](#) webpage, as well as planning and preparation for longer term interventions and strategies.

Sites using the EDSCLS platform can produce percentage distributions and item averages (means) for each item in the survey.

These guiding questions include suggestions for examining item-level data about how:

- a. An Emergency Readiness and Management item is perceived by individual respondent groups; and
- b. An Emergency Readiness and Management item is perceived across respondent groups but only for items worded *exactly the same way* for each group (called *comparable items*).


These types of guiding questions are detailed here.⁵

A. Examining Emergency Readiness and Management Items Within a Respondent Group

You can compare individual Emergency Readiness and Management items with each other within an individual respondent group (students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff, or parents/guardians). Comparing items in this way may provide districts and schools with concrete examples of emergency readiness and management that may be more actionable, warranting more immediate implementation of interventions found on the [Emergency Readiness and Management](#) webpage, as well as planning and preparation for longer term interventions and strategies.




When comparing the averages (means) of individual items, it is important to make sure that you are comparing “apples to apples.” Sometimes a high average (mean) item value represents a positive perception, and sometimes a high average (mean) item value represents a negative perception, depending on how the item response options of 1–4 are valenced, or directed. If you want to compare item averages (means), click on the *Data Interpretation Guide* section on [item valence and reverse coding](#) to access important information you will need before comparing them.⁶



WHAT ABOUT USING ITEM-LEVEL DATA TO EXAMINE PARENTS’/ GUARDIANS’ PERCEPTIONS?

Yes! As noted earlier, the EDSCLS parent data do not include Emergency Readiness and Management scale scores or average (mean) topic area values; however, parent/guardian item-level data can be used to consider how parents perceive specific areas of emergency readiness and management.

⁵  Unlike other topic areas within the EDSCLS, Emergency Readiness and Management items are not organized by content (called an *item content group*). Thus, you cannot compare across content groups as with other topics.

⁶ Note that all of the items in Emergency Readiness and Management are positively valenced; therefore, item averages (means) within this topic area can be directly compared.


B. Comparing Emergency Readiness and Management Items Across Respondent Groups if Worded Exactly the Same Way

Item frequencies and averages (means) can be examined across respondent groups, *but only if the items are worded exactly the same way*. This approach is helpful in cases where differences between groups or subgroups of respondents were found in the Emergency Readiness and Management average (mean) values. For example, both instructional staff and noninstructional staff are presented with the item, “This school has a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in shootings.” Because the survey items are identical, you can compare the responses of instructional staff to the responses of noninstructional staff on this item.

Table 1 displays Emergency Readiness and Management items included in the EDSCLS.

Table 1. Items for the Emergency Readiness and Management Topic Area

Student	Students know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood), or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.
Student	If students hear about a threat to school or student safety, they would report it to someone in authority.
Instructional staff	I know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood), or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.
Instructional staff	This school has a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in shootings.
Instructional staff	This school has a written plan that clearly describes procedures to be performed in natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes or tornadoes).
Instructional staff	This school or district provides effective training in safety procedures to staff (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills).
Noninstructional staff	I know what to do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood), or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.
Noninstructional staff	This school has a written plan that describes procedures to be performed in shootings.
Noninstructional staff	This school has a written plan that clearly describes procedures to be performed in natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes or tornadoes).
Noninstructional staff	This school or district provides effective training in safety procedures to staff (e.g., lockdown training or fire drills).
Parent	This school notifies parents or guardians effectively in the case of a schoolwide emergency.
Parent	This school takes effective measures to ensure the safety of students.
Parent	This school has made it clear to my child what he or she should do if there is an emergency, natural disaster (tornado, flood), or a dangerous situation (e.g., violent person on campus) during the school day.



Looking at these items may provide you with more in-depth information on whether your district or school needs to place more emphasis on emergency readiness and management. If you find that student responses are not as favorable as you would like (or if you find a discrepancy between the perceptions of students and other respondents), you may want to think about the following questions:



What can my district or school do to provide a greater focus on emergency readiness and management?

What can my district or school do to better ensure that our emergency readiness and management efforts are addressing the needs of students, staff, and parents?

What policies and procedures are currently in place in my district or school to support emergency readiness and management? What new policies and procedures need to be implemented? Which policies and procedures should we consider modifying or eliminating? What are our state requirements in this area? [What are our obligations under federal civil rights laws in this area?](#)

Note: In all cases, you must comply with your obligations under federal civil rights laws and any applicable state requirements.

Appendix A: Guiding Questions: District Average (Mean) Emergency Readiness and Management Values

You can use the guiding questions in this appendix to help you use your data to focus on universal and targeted approaches to emergency readiness and management. In this appendix, you will find:

- Guiding questions (average [mean] Emergency Readiness and Management values)

Average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values (on a scale of 1–4) can help you see how favorably respondents perceive the topic area. Click on the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) to go to more information on average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values and an explanation of the scale of 1–4.

A Universal Approach

GQ1. What does our **student** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value tell us about how students perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our student average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for instructional staff in our district? For noninstructional staff in our district?

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our student average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the student average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest within and outside of the Safety domain?

GQ2. What does our **instructional staff** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value tell us how these staff perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our instructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for noninstructional staff in our district? For students in our district?



Using average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values, you can compare the perceptions of students and staff within and outside of the Safety domain. These comparisons will help you make meaningful interpretations of the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values.

See [Appendix C](#) in the *Data Interpretation Guide* for more information on interpreting average (mean) topic area values for EDSCLS users.



Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our instructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the instructional staff average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest, within and outside of the Safety domain?
-

GQ3. What does our **noninstructional staff** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value tell us about how these staff perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our noninstructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for instructional staff in our district? For students in our district?

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our noninstructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the noninstructional staff average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest within and outside of the Safety domain?
-

A Targeted Approach

GQ4. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **students** perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?


For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of students (e.g., female students) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., female student average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain student subgroups (e.g., female students) compare with that subgroup of instructional staff and noninstructional staff (i.e., female instructional staff and female noninstructional staff)?
-



GQ5. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **instructional staff** perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of instructional staff (e.g., Asian instructional staff) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., Asian instructional staff average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain instructional staff subgroups (e.g., Black or African-American instructional staff) compare with that subgroup of noninstructional staff and students (i.e., Black or African-American students and Black or African-American noninstructional staff)?
-

GQ6. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **noninstructional staff** perceive emergency readiness and management in our district?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of noninstructional staff (e.g., male noninstructional staff) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., male noninstructional staff average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain noninstructional subgroups (e.g., Asian noninstructional staff) compare with that subgroup of instructional staff and students (i.e., Asian students and Asian instructional staff)?
-

Now that you have considered these questions, what would you like to do next? You can:

- Click on [item-level data](#) to see how item-level results can help provide you with concrete examples of emergency readiness and management that may be more immediately actionable.

You also can:

- Click on [Emergency Readiness and Management](#) to go to a webpage with suggestions for interventions that can be implemented immediately as well as longer term strategies and interventions.

Appendix B: Guiding Questions: School Average (Mean) Emergency Readiness and Management Values

You can use the guiding questions in this appendix to help you use your data to focus on universal and targeted approaches to emergency readiness and management. In this appendix, you will find:

- Guiding questions (average [mean] Emergency Readiness and Management values).

Average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values (on a scale of 1–4) can help you see how favorably respondents perceive the topic area. Click on the [Data Interpretation Guide](#) to go to more information on average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values and an explanation of the scale of 1–4.

A Universal Approach

GQ1. What does our **student** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value tell us about how students perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our student average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for instructional staff in our school? For noninstructional staff in our school?

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our student average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the student average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest within and outside of the Safety domain?

GQ2. What does our **instructional staff** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value tell us about how these staff perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our instructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for noninstructional staff in our school? For students in our school?



Using average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values, you can compare the perceptions of students and staff within and outside of the Safety domain. These comparisons will help you make meaningful interpretations of the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values.

See [Appendix C](#) in the *Data Interpretation Guide* for more information on interpreting average (mean) topic area values for EDSCS users.



Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our instructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the instructional staff average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest within and outside of the Safety domain?
-

GQ3. What do our **noninstructional staff** average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values tell us about how staff perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does our noninstructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for instructional staff in our school? For students in our school?

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does our noninstructional staff average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value compare with the noninstructional staff average (mean) value of other topic areas of interest within and outside of the Safety domain?
-

A Targeted Approach

GQ4. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **students** perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?


For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of students (e.g., female students) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., female student average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain student subgroups (e.g., female students) compare with that subgroup of instructional staff and noninstructional staff (i.e., female instructional staff and female noninstructional staff)?
-



GQ5. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **instructional staff** perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of instructional staff (e.g., Asian instructional staff) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., Asian instructional staff average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain instructional staff subgroups (e.g., Black or African-American instructional staff) compare with that subgroup of noninstructional staff and students (i.e., Black or African-American students and Black or African-American noninstructional staff)?

GQ6. What do our average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management values **by respondent characteristics** tell us about how **noninstructional staff** perceive emergency readiness and management in our school?

For example, you can think about these comparisons:

Comparing across topic areas:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain subgroups of noninstructional staff (e.g., male noninstructional staff) compare with that subgroup's average (mean) values on other topic areas within the Safety domain (e.g., male noninstructional staff average [mean] values on physical safety)?

Comparing across respondent groups:

- How does the average (mean) Emergency Readiness and Management value for certain noninstructional subgroups (e.g., Asian noninstructional staff) compare with that subgroup of instructional staff and students (i.e., Asian students and Asian instructional staff)?

Now that you have considered these questions, what would you like to do next? You can:

- Click on [item-level data](#) to see how item-level results can help provide you with concrete examples of emergency readiness and management that may be more immediately actionable.
- Click on [Emergency Readiness and Management](#) to go to a webpage with suggestions for interventions that can be implemented immediately as well as longer term strategies and interventions.

Disclaimer

This *Emergency Readiness and Management Topic Area Discussion Guide* was designed and written under the U.S. Department of Education (Department) Contract Number EDESE12O0035 by the American Institutes for Research, the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). Rita Foy Moss served as the contracting officer's representative (COR) for the NCSSLE technical assistance center. This document contains resource materials that are provided for the user's convenience. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject matter experts as well as hypertext links, contact addresses, and websites to information created and maintained by other public and private organizations. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the Department. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

Second Edition
2018

This document is in the public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint this product is not necessary, the following citation is preferred:

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. (2018). *Data interpretation topical discussion guide: Emergency Readiness and Management school climate survey data*. Washington, DC: Author.

This resource is available free of charge at <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/SCIRP/datainttopicalguideerm.pdf>.

Availability of Alternate Formats

Requests for documents in alternate formats such as Braille or large print should be submitted to the Alternate Format Center by calling 202.260.0852 or by contacting the 504 coordinator via e-mail at om_eeos@ed.gov.

Notice to Limited-English-Proficient Persons

If you have difficulty understanding English, you may request language assistance services for Department information that is available to the public. These language assistance services are available free of charge. If you need more information about interpretation or translation services, please call 1-800-USA-LEARN (1.800.872.5327) (TTY: 1.800.877.8339) or e-mail us at ED.Language.Assistance@ed.gov. You also can write to U.S. Department of Education, Information Resource Center, LBJ Education Building, 400 Maryland Ave. SW, Washington, DC, 20202.