# Administration and Technical User Guide for the School Climate Surveys

# Table of Contents

**1. Introduction** ..... **4**

**2. Technical Guide** ..... **5**

2.1 System Setup in Virtual Environment (for IT Staff) ..... 5

2.1.1 Installation and Configuration ..... 6

2.1.2 Source Code and Database Access ..... 15

2.2 SCLS Administration (for Survey Administrators) ..... 19

2.2.1 SCLS Administrator Dashboard ..... 20

2.2.2 Authentication ..... 22

2.2.3 Education Agency ..... 23

2.2.4 Data Collection ..... 26

2.2.5 Informed Consent ..... 28

2.2.6 Respondent Usernames ..... 30

2.2.7 Reports ..... 42

2.2.7.1 Survey Status Reports ..... 43

2.2.7.2 Survey Results Reports ..... 48

2.2.8 Respondent-Level Survey Results ..... 54

**3. Administration Guide: Recommended Practices** ..... **56**

3.1 Preparing for the Survey Administration ..... 56

3.2 Setting Dates for the Survey Administration Window ..... 60

3.3 Test Runs Prior to Administration of Student Surveys ..... 61

3.4 During the Survey Administration Window ..... 62

3.5 After the Data Collection Window Closes ..... 64

**4. Instructions for in-School Administration of the Student Survey** ..... **66**

**5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** ..... **68**

5.1 Survey Logistics and Administration ..... 68

5.2 Technical Platform Capabilities ..... 70

5.3 Privacy and Data Security ..... 71

**6. Understanding the SCLS Scales** ..... **73**

6.1 Presentation of Scale Scores ..... 73

6.2 Subgroup Reporting ..... 75

**Appendix A** ..... **79**

**Appendix B** ..... **93**

**Appendix C** ..... **96**

**Appendix D** ..... **97**

**Appendix E** ..... **98**
**Appendix F** ..... **99**
**Appendix G** ..... **100**

# 1. Introduction

Welcome to the School Climate Surveys (SCLS)!

The SCLS offers a platform that includes a suite of survey instruments being developed for schools, districts, and states by the U.S. Department of Education. Through the SCLS, schools nationwide will have access to survey instruments and a survey platform that enables the collection and reporting of school climate data across stakeholders at the state or local level. The surveys can be used to produce school-, district-, and state-level scores on various indicators of school climate from the perspectives of students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff and principals, and parents and guardians. The U.S. Department of Education will also provide benchmark data in 2016, collected from a nationally representative sample of schools across the United States, to facilitate comparisons of school climate scores at the local and national levels.

*The SCLS platform provides education agencies with the ability to survey students, their parents, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals), to provide a comprehensive picture of a school's climate.*

The SCLS platform allows education leaders to seek the viewpoints of multiple respondent groups. A multi-perspective approach is important because each of the stakeholders experience school climate differently. The SCLS includes four surveys. The "student survey," is intended for students in grades 5-12. The "instructional staff survey," seeks input from teachers and other staff who provide instruction to students in grades 5-12. The "principal and noninstructional staff survey," was developed for noninstructional staff (e.g., administrators, counselors, coaches, librarians) who provide services to students in grades 5-12. The final instrument, the "parent survey," is for parents and guardians of students in grades 5-12. Combined, these four surveys measure school climate from the perspectives of diverse groups of stakeholders.

For more information on the background and purpose of the SCLS, see appendix A.

***Features of the SCLS Platform***

The U.S. Department of Education's primary goal in the development of the SCLS platform is to provide a no-cost, user-friendly, high-functioning platform that schools, school districts, and states throughout the United States can use to administer the suite of SCLS surveys. To achieve these goals, the SCLS platform

- Does not require education agencies to incur licensing fees or other costs;
- Can be installed and administered using a "basic[1]" network infrastructure;
- Minimizes risks to data confidentiality; and
- Allows for the decentralized storage of data, accessible only to authorized users within the education agency that is administering the data collection.

The SCLS is also designed to minimize the effort required to conduct the survey, compile and analyze the data, and produce reports on the results. The SCLS platform allows administrators to create linkages to external data sources for the student survey, and future versions of the platform will allow Survey Administrators to customize the survey with additional questions.

[1] Please see minimum requirements in 2.1 System Setup in Virtual Environment.

# 2. Technical Guide

This section provides information about how to use the SCLS web-based platform by education agencies, from the installation and configuration through setting up the data collection and producing reports. The section includes two parts:

> **1.) Section** 2.1 System Setup in Virtual Environment **is intended for the education agency's IT staff** who will be in charge of downloading, installing, and configuring the SCLS web-based platform. Step-by-step instructions for IT staff are included in 2.1.1 IT Installation and Configuration. IT staff must install and configure SCLS platform before the Survey Administrator can access it. In addition, the SCLS platform is open-source, therefore 2.1.2 Source Code and Database Access provides the option to allow Web Developers and Database Administrators to view and make any changes to the existing PHP source code and MySQL database.
>
> **2.) Section** 2.2 SCLS Administration **is intended for Survey Administrators** who oversee the survey data collection through the SCLS dashboard to initiate and monitor data collections and product reports. The dashboard contains all the tools necessary to manage SCLS data collections. It is strongly recommended that Survey Administrators become familiar with the dashboard (along with this guide) in order to address issues that may arise during live data collections.

## 2.1 System Setup in Virtual Environment (for IT Staff)

This section provides instructions to IT staff on how to download and configure the SCLS platform package; set up the URL and e-mail; and access the PHP code and MySQL database. The instructions in this subsection should be performed by IT staff with administrative permissions to a web server with Apache, Internet Information Services (IIS), or NGINX. The SCLS package should be installed on the state's, district's, or school's server (depending on the level of data collection).

The image of the SCLS platform consists of a virtual machine[2] with a Linux operating system, Apache web server, MySQL Relational Database Management System, PHP server-side scripting language,[3] and the SCLS application. The following lists the key technical requirements, followed by more specific instructions, for the platform's installation.

- Windows (NT 4.0, 2000, XP, Server 2003, Vista, Windows 7, Windows 8), Linux (2.4, 2.6, and 3.x), or Mac OS X
- At least 1 GB of RAM
- At least 4 GB of free hard disk space, plus additional space depending upon the number of total respondents (about 1 MB per 100 respondents)
- A high speed internet connection with at least 2 Mbps upload and download speeds
- A static IP and URL to which to bind the website

[2] A virtual machine is a software implementation of a computing environment in which an operating system or program can be installed and run.
[3] Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP (or LAMP) are freely available and distributed under open-source licenses.

It is recommended that before beginning the download and installation steps you first save your current work and exit from all other programs that might be running. The steps and estimated time for each step are listed below:

- Download the 3 GB Virtual Disk Image (VDI)[4] of the SCLS platform from the NCSSLE website (10 minutes).
- Download and install Oracle VM VirtualBox (5 minutes).
- Configure the SCLS virtual machine (15 minutes).
- Create the URL and make it accessible via the web (5 minutes) and configure the virtual machine to send e-mail (5 minutes).
- View or modify the PHP source code (optional).
- View or modify the MySQL database (optional).

### 2.1.1 Installation and Configuration

*A. To download the SCLS package:*

1. Download the VirtualBox image of the SCLS platform from https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scls.

*B. To download and install Oracle VM VirtualBox:*

1. Download the latest version of VirtualBox for your server's operating system (either Windows, Linux, or Mac OS X) from https://www.virtualbox.org/wiki/Downloads.

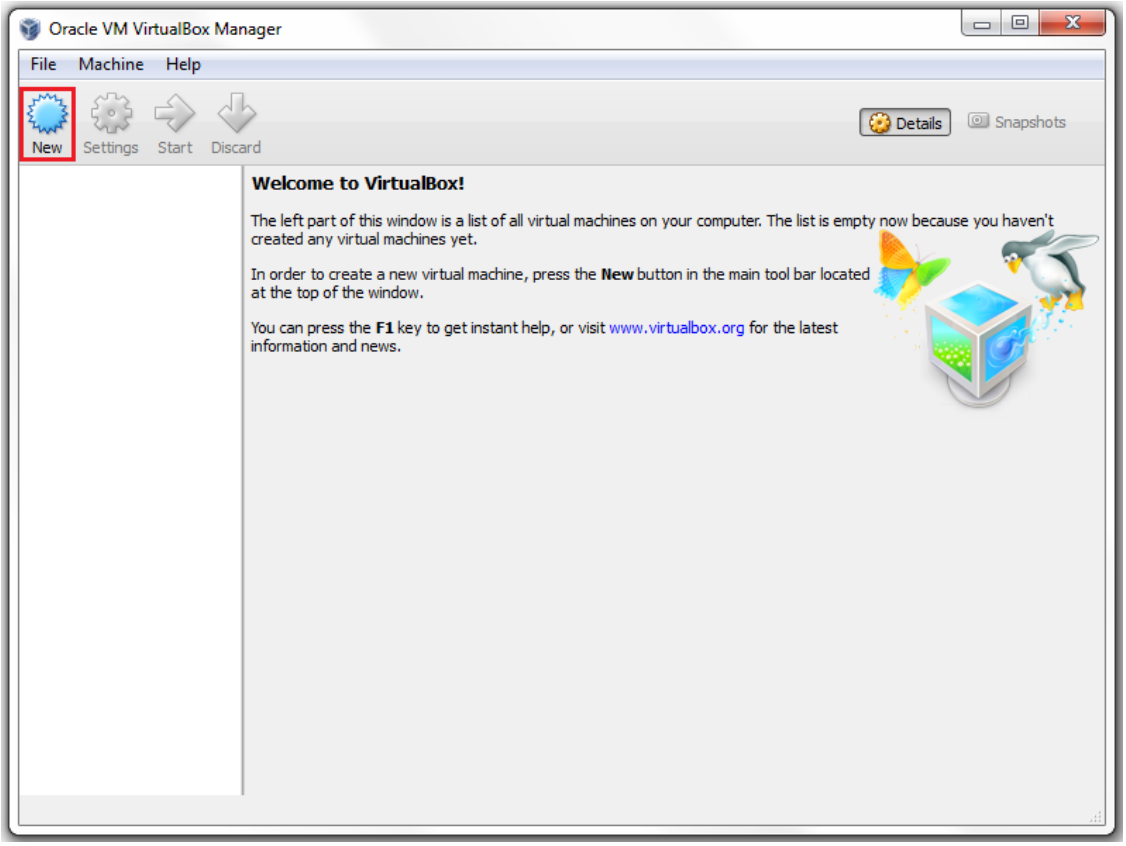
2. Install VirtualBox.

| **N O T E** |
| --- |
| For step-by-step installation instructions, refer to https://www.virtualbox.org/manual/ch02.html. |

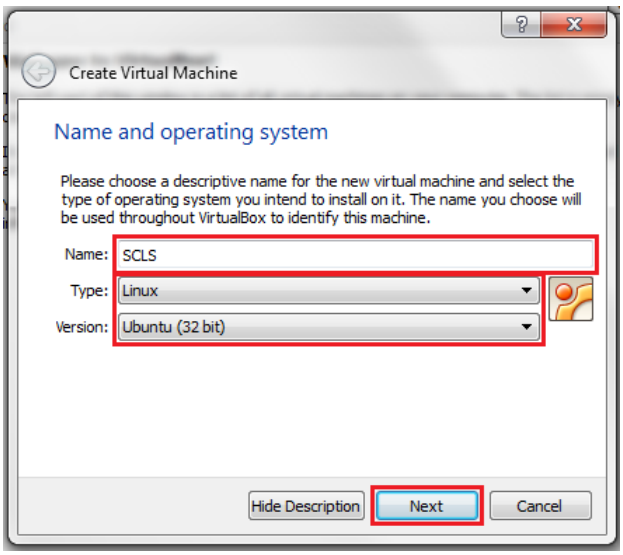
[4] VDI is the file format used by Oracle VM VirtualBox, an open-source virtualization application.

*C. To configure the virtual machine:*

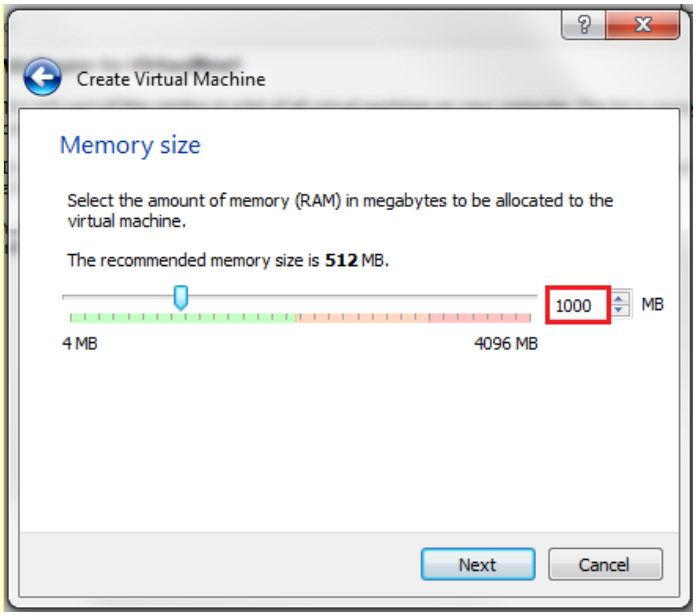
1. Open Oracle VM VirtualBox and click on the "New" button on the main tool bar.



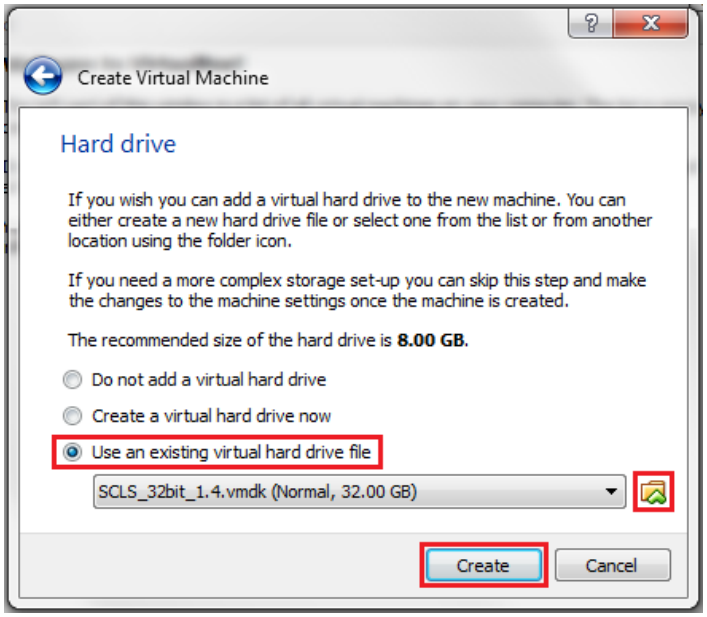

2. Enter a descriptive name for the new virtual machine in the “Name” text box (e.g., “SCLS”). Regardless of your own server’s operating system, select “Linux” from the “Type” drop-down box. Select “Ubuntu (32 bit)” from the “Version” drop-down box. Then click on the “Next” button.



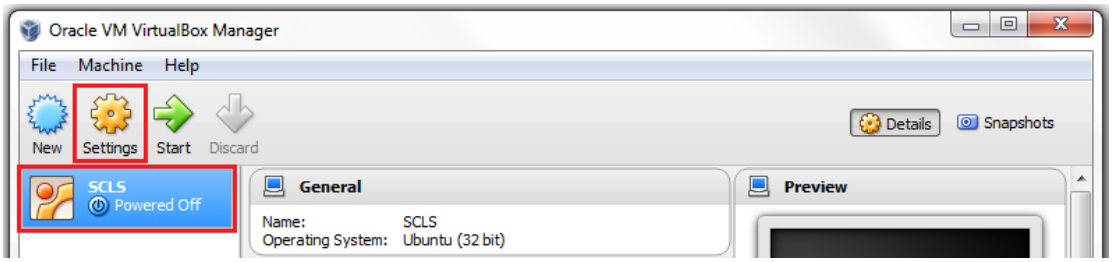
3. For the memory size, specify at least 1000MB or more depending on your server's specifications. Then click on the "Next" button.



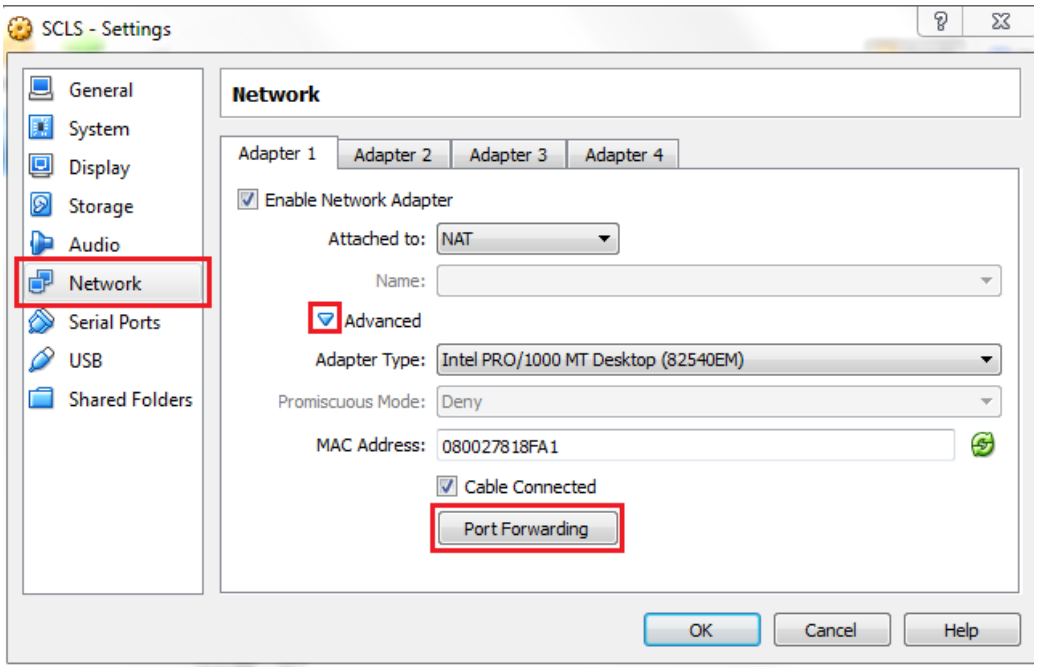

4. Select the "Use an existing virtual hard drive file" option button. Click on the *Folder* icon button, and open the downloaded SCLS VirtualBox image. Then click on the "Create" button. The new virtual machine should now appear on the left side of the window.



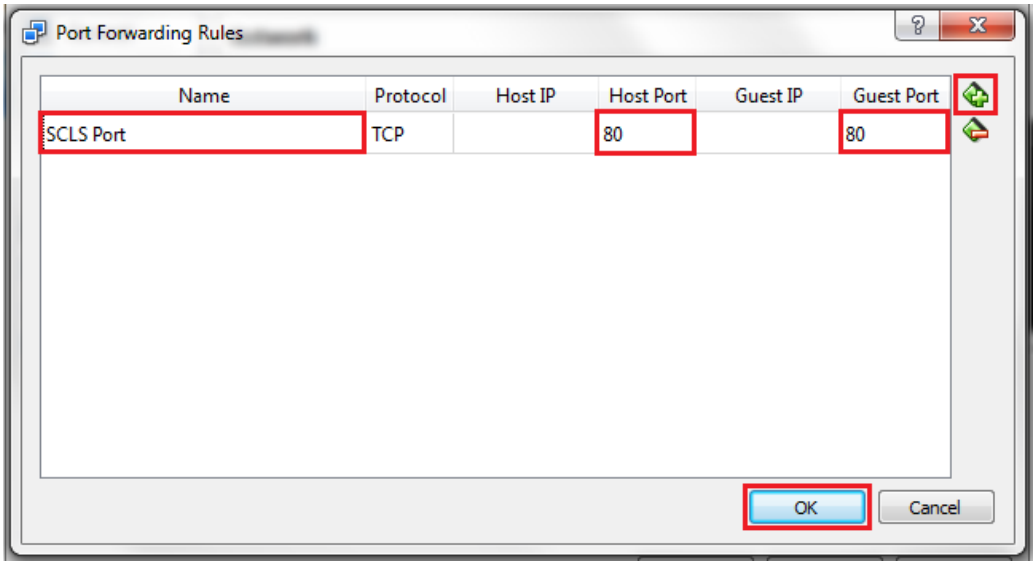
5. Make sure the SCLS virtual machine is selected on the left, then click on the “Settings” button on the main tool bar.



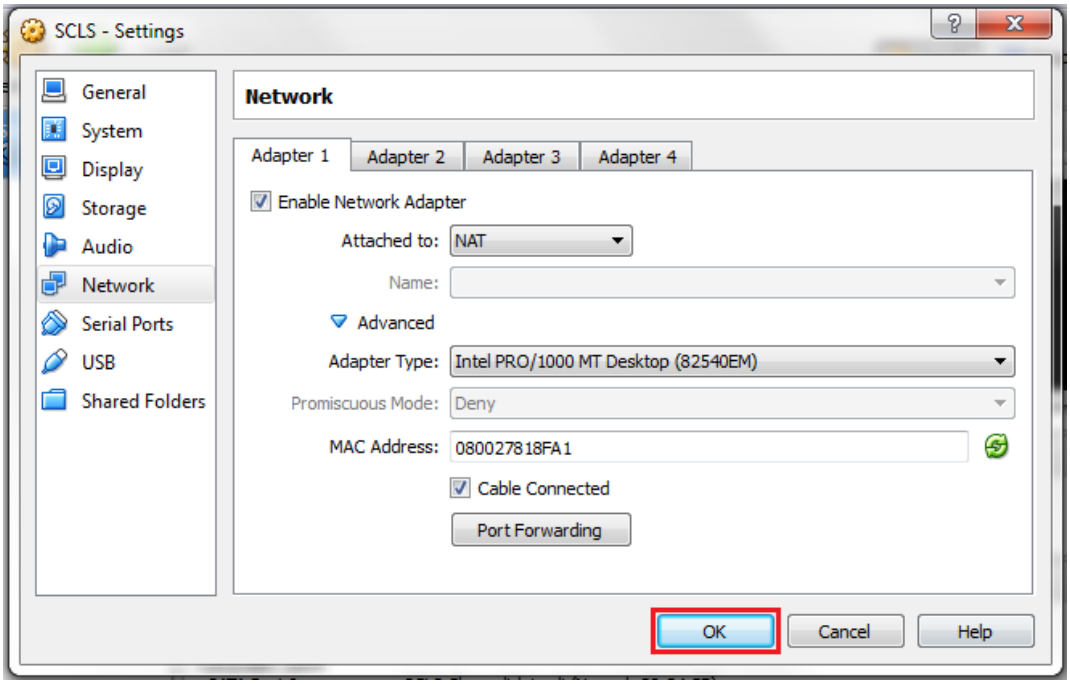

6. From the Settings window, select "Network" on the left side, click on the “Advanced” *Expand* icon, and click on the “Port Forwarding” button, which will open the Port Forwarding Rules window.



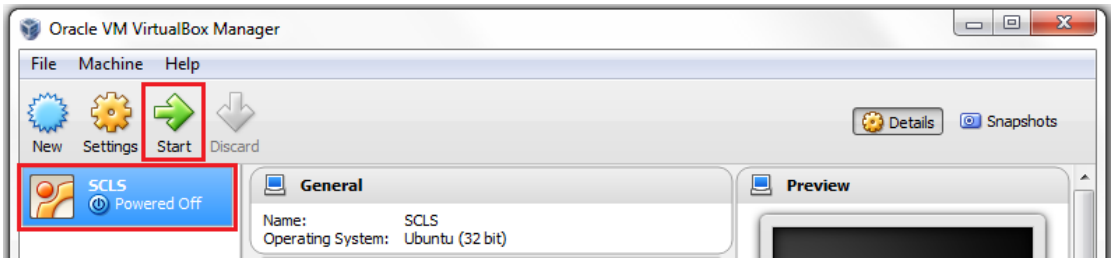
7. From the Port Forwarding Rules window, click on the *Add* icon on the far right to add a new record. Under the “Name” column, enter a descriptive name (e.g., “SCLS Port”). Under “Host Port” enter “80” or specify a different port of your choosing. Under “Guest Port” enter “80”. Then click on the “OK” button to close the window.




8. Click on the “OK” button to close the Setting window.



9. To start the SCLS virtual machine, make sure it is selected on the left, and then click on the "Start" button on the main tool bar. The machine will take a few seconds to boot up.




Once the SCLS virtual machine has been downloaded, installed, and configured, the following instructions should be performed by a Network/System Administrator, as there may be security and firewall issues involved.

*D. To set up the URL and e-mail:*

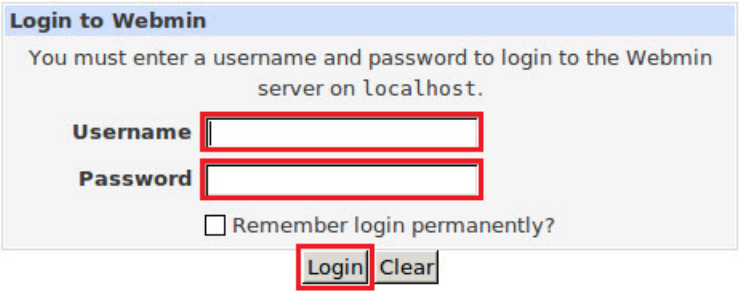
1. Log into your hosting provider's web portal and navigate to the DNS section. Create a new record with your domain name without "www" (e.g., "edagency.edu"), and the static IP address of the computer hosting the SCLS virtual machine.

2. To make the domain accessible with "www" at the beginning as well, create a CNAME record with "www" and "@".

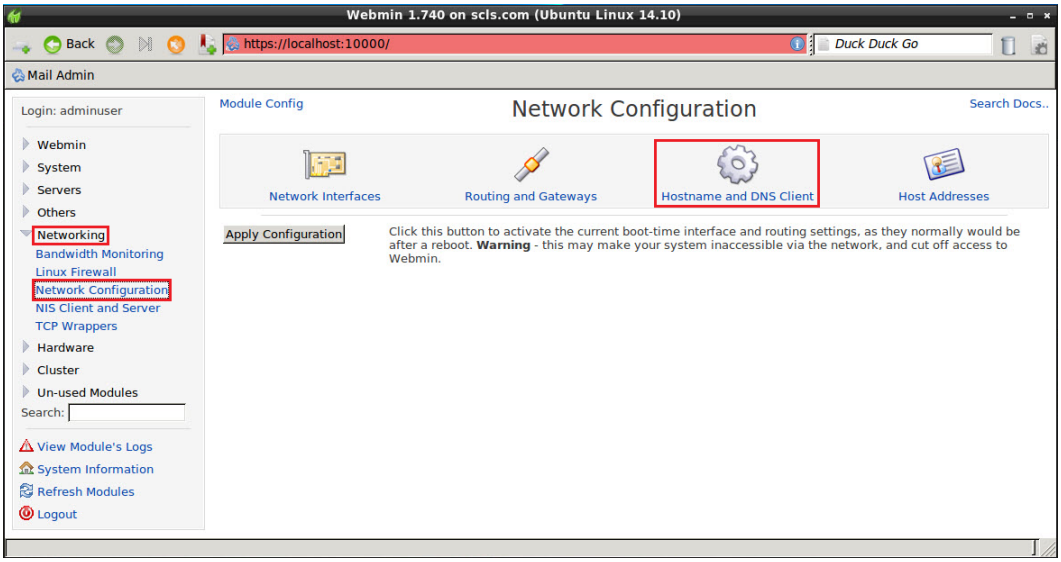
3. To configure your server to send mail, create MX records containing information about your mail service providers.

4. To configure the hostname and DNS, double click on the "Midori" icon buton located on the desktop.

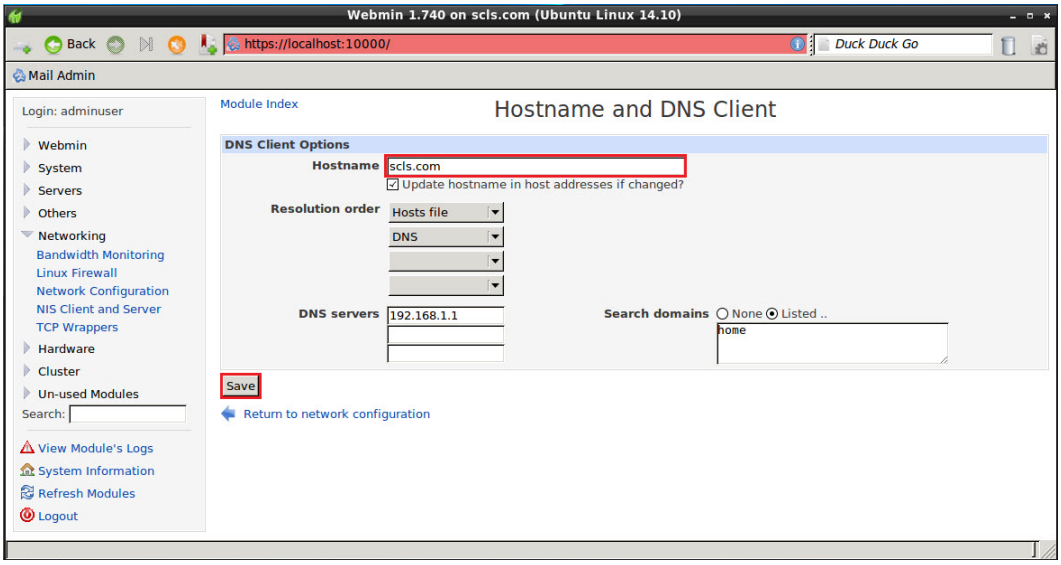
Enter "adminuser" in the "Username" text box and enter "OsunXiboGyP4x" in the "Password" text box. Then click on the "Login" button.



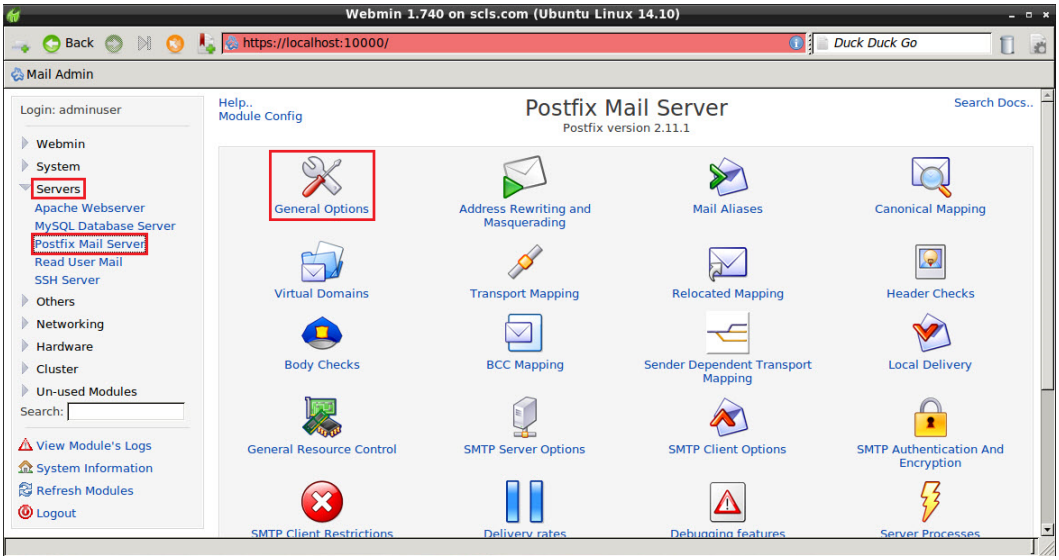
Select “Networking” on the left side, then select “Network Configuration”. Then click on the “Hostname and DNS Client” button.



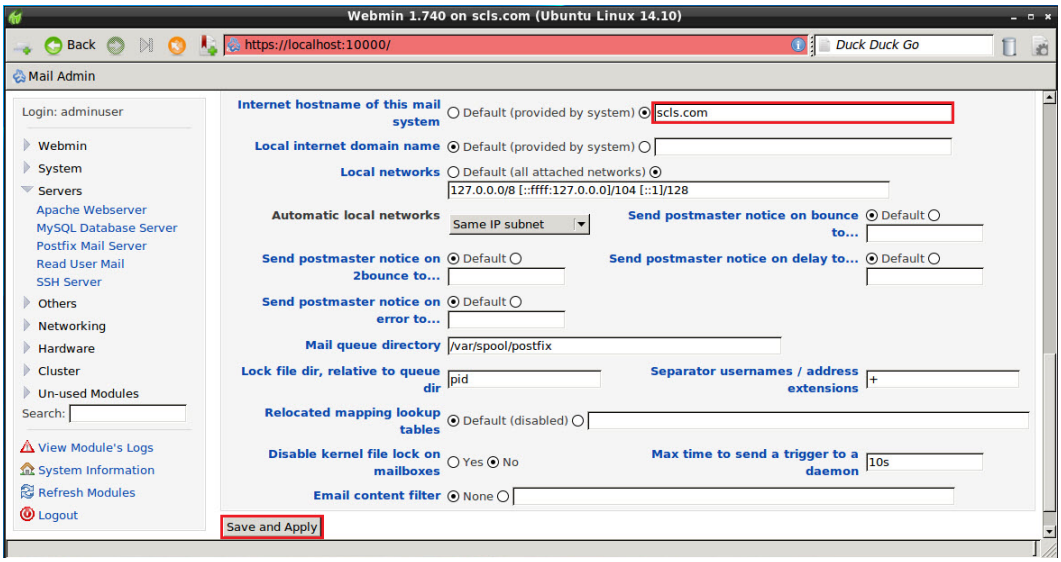

In the “Hostname” text box, replace “scls.com” with your URL without the “www”. Then click on the “Save” button.



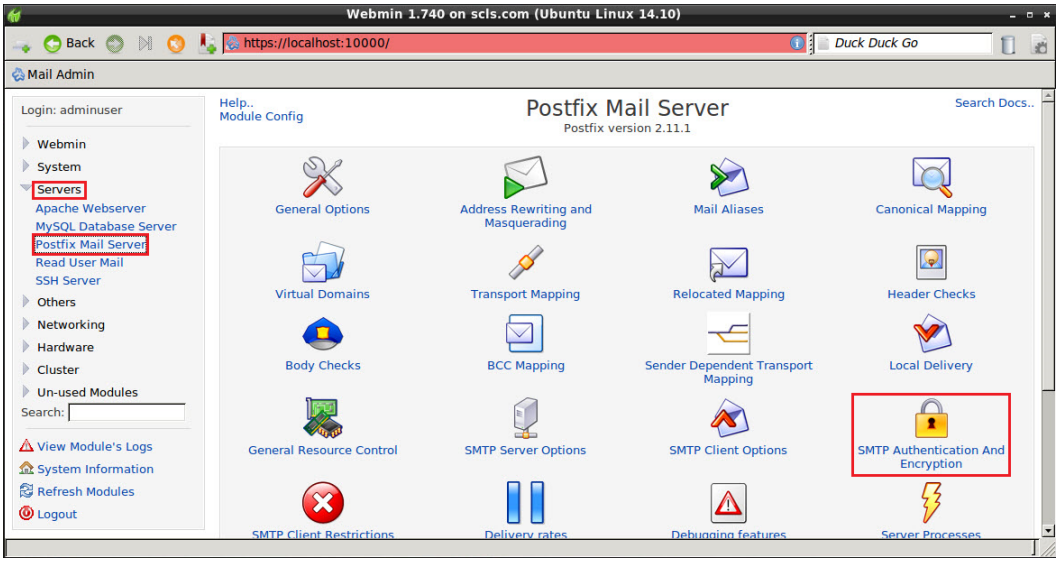
5. To set the hostname of the mail system, select “Servers” from the menu on the left side of the window, then select “Postfix Mail Server”. Then click on the “General Options” button.



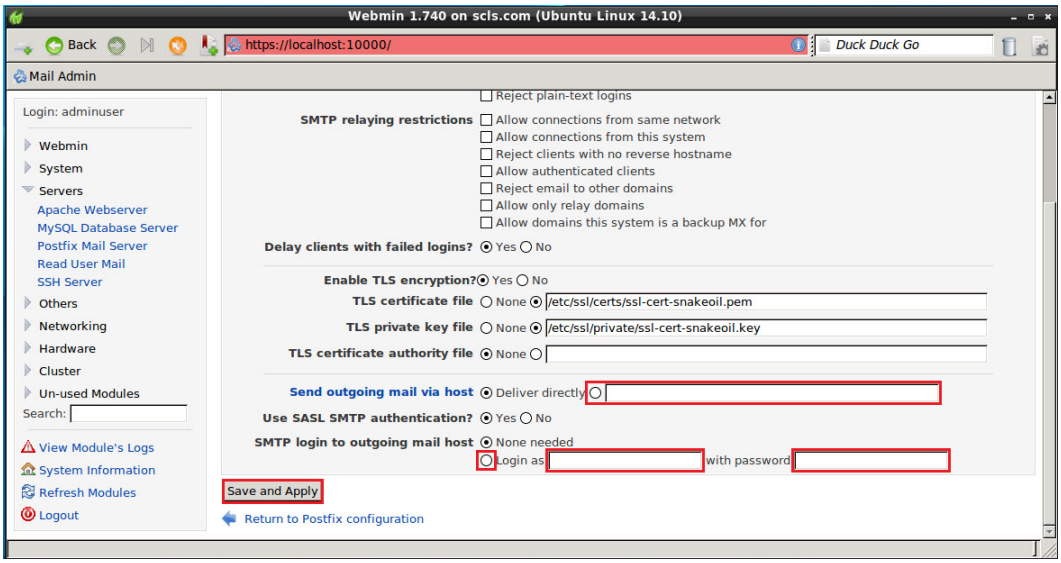

Scroll down and replace “scls.com” with your URL without the “www” in the “Internet hostname of this mail system” text box. Then click on the “Save and Apply” button.



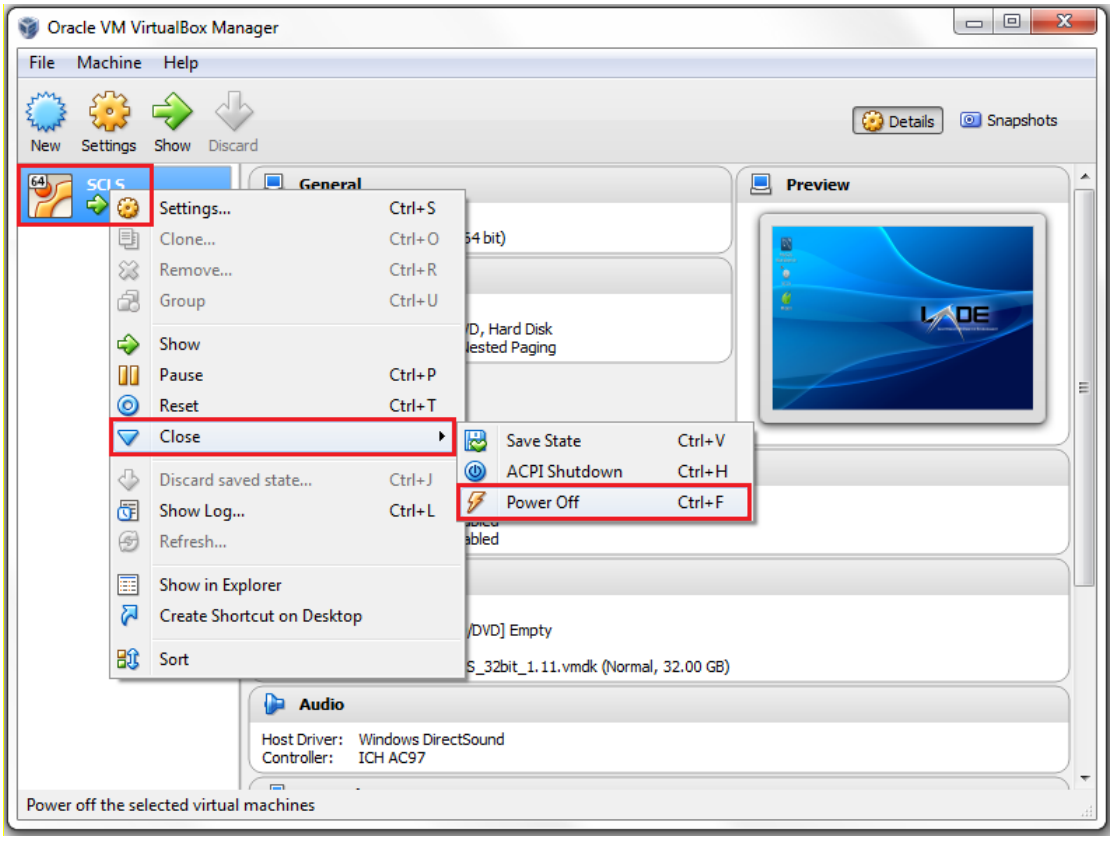
6. To configure SMTP mail with your existing mail server, select “Servers” on the left side, then select “Postfix Mail Server”. Then click on the “SMTP Authentication And Encryption” button.



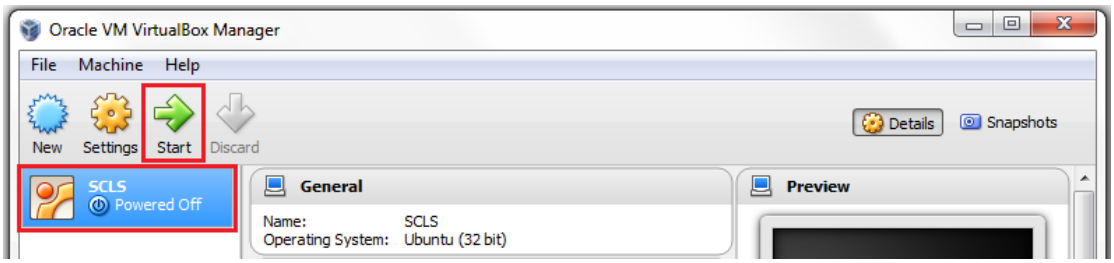

Scroll down. For the “Send outgoing mail via host” radio button, select the second option and enter the SMTP hostname. For the “SMTP login to outgoing mail host” radio button, select the second option. Enter the SMTP host username in the “Login as” text box and enter your SMTP host password in the “with password” text box. Then click on the “Save and Apply” button. If this step is unsuccessful, revert back to the default configuration (i.e., “Deliver directly”, “None needed”).



7. To stop the SCLS virtual machine, right click the name on the left, select “Close”, then select “Power Off”.




To restart, make sure the SCLS virtual machine is selected on the left, then click on the "Start" button on the main tool bar.



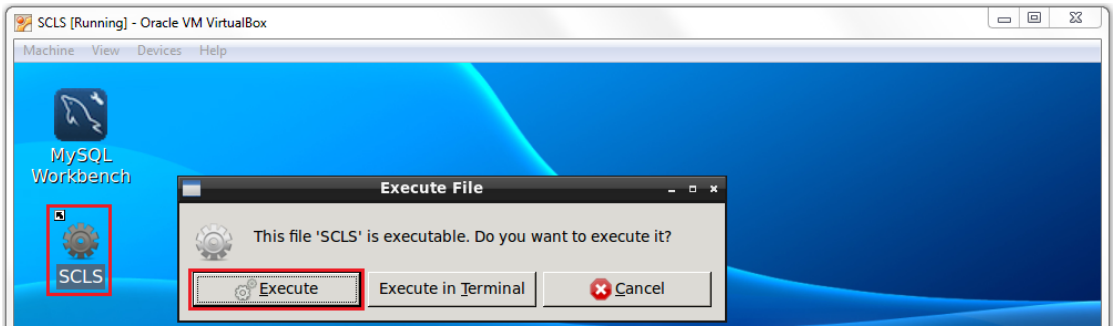

8. Make sure to provide the Survey Administrator with the URL and e-mail address you created in the steps above.

### 2.1.2 Source Code and Database Access

The SCLS platform is open-source, and allows Web Developers and Database Administrators to view and make any changes to the existing PHP source code and MySQL database, such as modifying the user interface or the tables in the database.

*A. To access the PHP source code:*

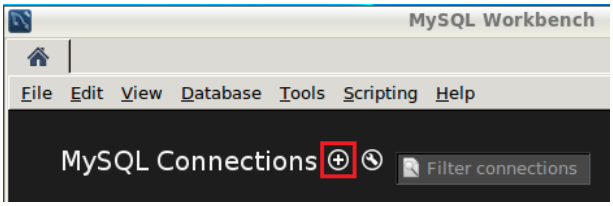
1. Start the SCLS virtual machine. Double click on the “SCLS” executable file located on the desktop. Click on the “Execute” button to open the file in Sublime Text.



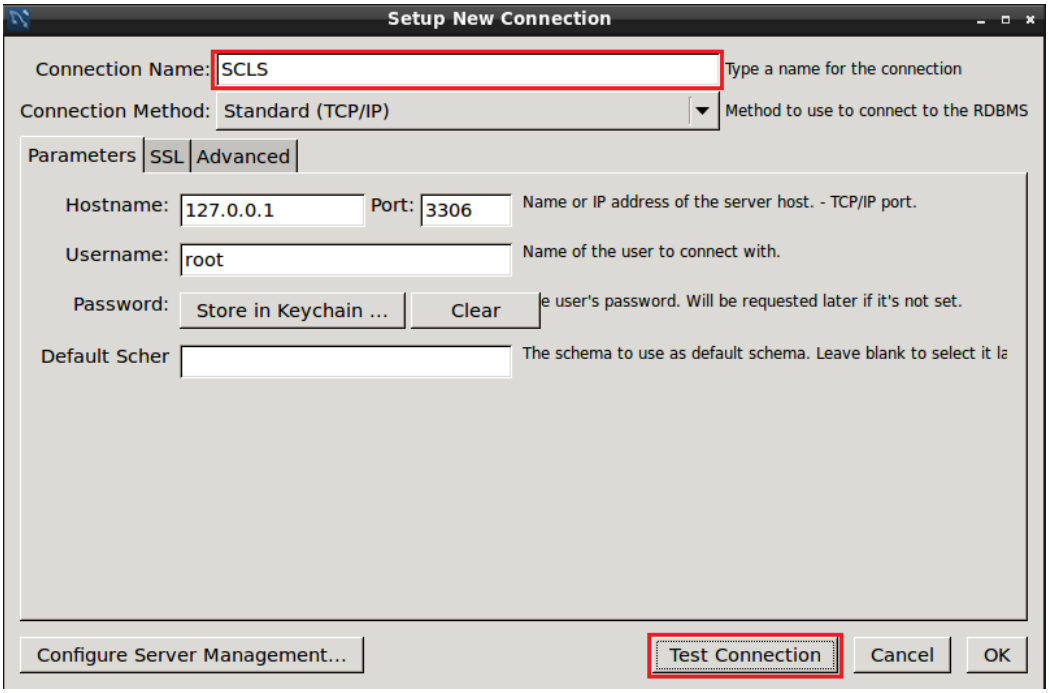

*B. To access the MySQL database:*

1. Start the SCLS virtual machine. Double click on the “MySQL Workbench” executable file located on the desktop.

2. Click on the *Add* icon to add a new connection.

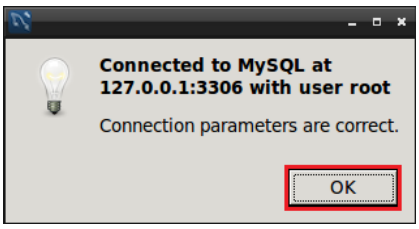


3. From the “Setup New Connection” window, type a name for the connection (e.g., “SCLS”) in the “Connection Name” text box. Then click on the “Test Connection” button.

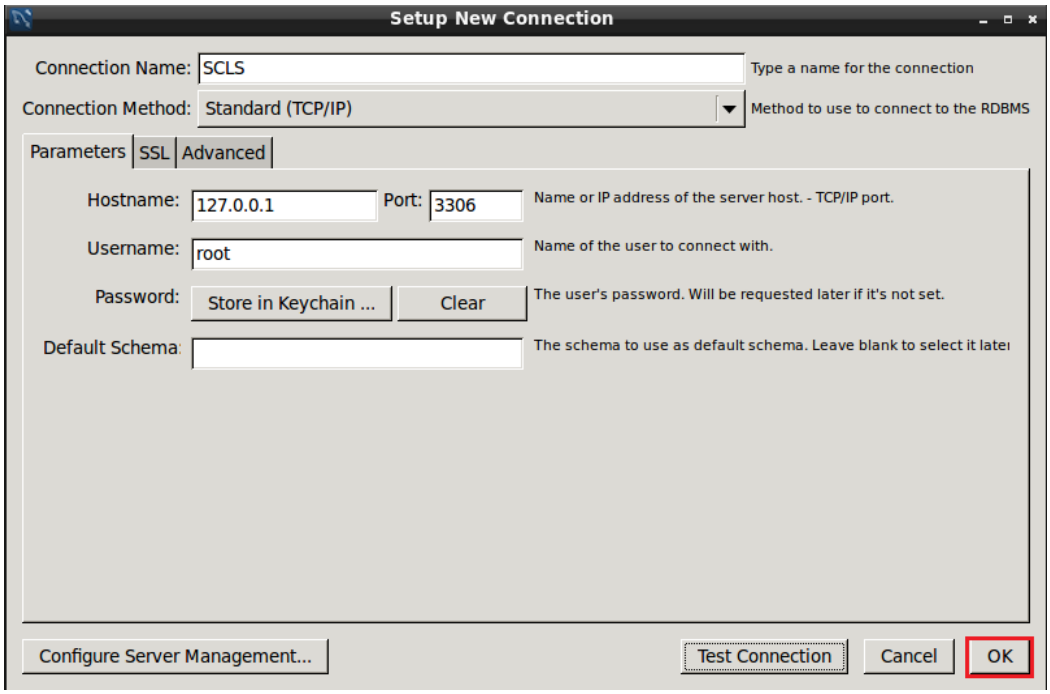



4. From the “Connect to MySQL Server” window, enter “PpkzDcnj” in the “Password” text box. The password will be hidden. Click on the “OK” button to close the window.

5. Click on the “OK” button to close the next window.



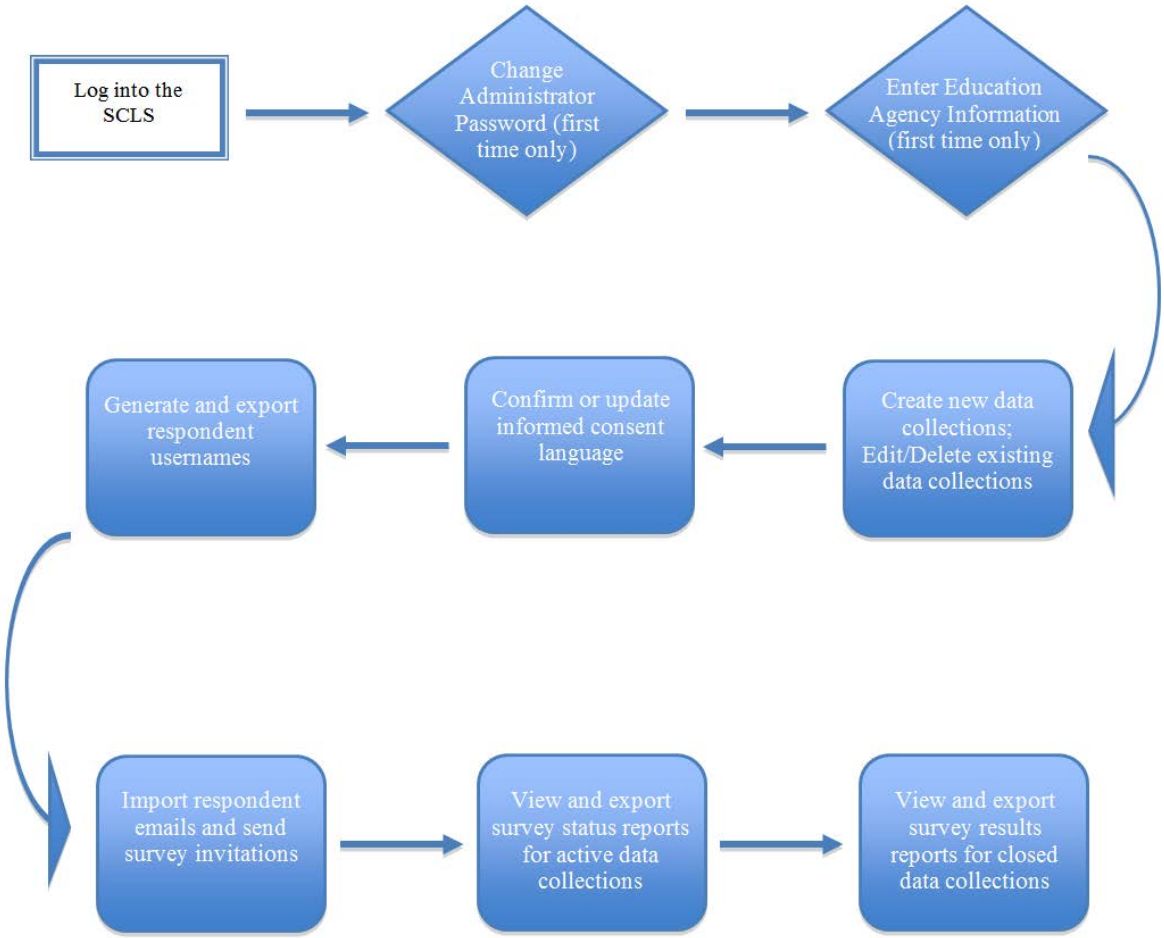
6. From the “Setup New Connection” window, click on the “OK” button.



## 2.2 SCLS Administration

This section is intended for SCLS Survey Administrators and covers how to administer the suite of school climate surveys to students, parents/guardians, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals). Figure 1 below displays the various steps for SCLS Survey Administrators to use the dashboard to carry out the survey planning, administration, and post administration processes. Each of these steps will be explained in more detail throughout this section.

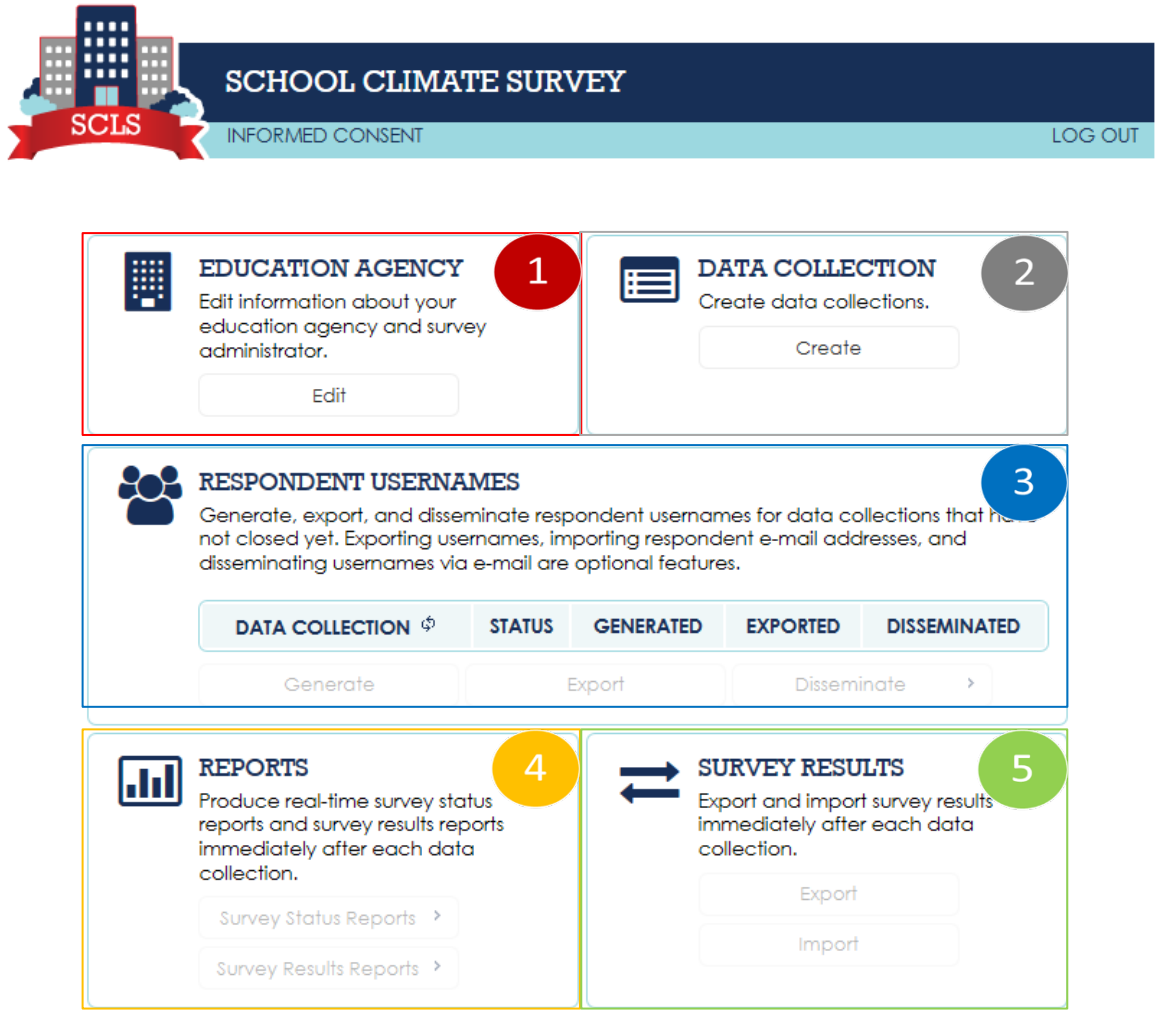
### Figure 1. SCLS Survey Administrator Tasks



### 2.2.1 SCLS Administrator Dashboard

Once the survey platform is installed and configured by IT staff, Survey Administrators will have access to the "Survey Administrator dashboard" which will be their control center throughout the survey process, where each of the steps in figure 1 can be executed. Figure 2 below displays the dashboard.

**Figure 2. SCLS Survey Administrator Dashboard**




The Survey Administrator dashboard is divided into five main boxed sections. The dashboard allows the Survey Administrator to:

1 edit information about the education agency administering the survey and the Survey Administrator;

2 create, edit, and delete data collections;

3 generate, export, and disseminate random usernames for each respondent group;

4 produce various types of reports, including real-time survey status reports during data collection and reports of survey results immediately after each data collection; and

5 export and import survey results.

Additionally, the dashboard allows Survey Administrators to incorporate appropriate informed consent language directly into the SCLS surveys. The SCLS includes pre-set informed consent language to provide respondents with information about the study and their rights to participate. They can also choose to not participate after reading the information. Survey Administrators can add additional language to the needs of the education agency. This feature can be accessed via the "INFORMED CONSENT" link found on the homepage of the dashboard.

**It is strongly recommended that Survey Administrators conduct a test run of the survey process prior to survey administration** (see 3.3 Test Run Prior to Administration of Student Surveys for more detail). This test run provides Survey Administrators with an opportunity to familiarize the full capabilities of the dashboard in order to be well-equipped to address possible issues that may arise during active data collections. For example, the survey status reports function allows Survey Administrators to monitor real-time submission rates[5], a useful feature that can be used to identify respondent groups with low submission rates. Nonresponse follow up efforts (e.g., e-mail reminders) can be implemented to increase participation rates.

Administrators may want to use figure 2 above and the accompanying list to follow along with the directions below. Altenatively, if IT staff has already downloaded and installed the SCLS package, administrators may want to follow along with the real dashboard open on the computer.

The icon button key below shows the icon symbols that are referenced throughout this guide.

| ICON BUTTON KEY: |
|---|
| Save |
| Delete |
| Information |
| Expand |
| Collapse |
| Refresh |

[5] The submission rate is calculated by the number of surveys that have been completed (i.e., submitted to the SCLS system) over the number of usernames randomly generated by the system.

### 2.2.2 Authentication

Before a Survey Administrator can begin using the features of the dashboard, s/he must log into the dashboard. Step-by-step instructions on how to log into the dashboard are provided in this section.

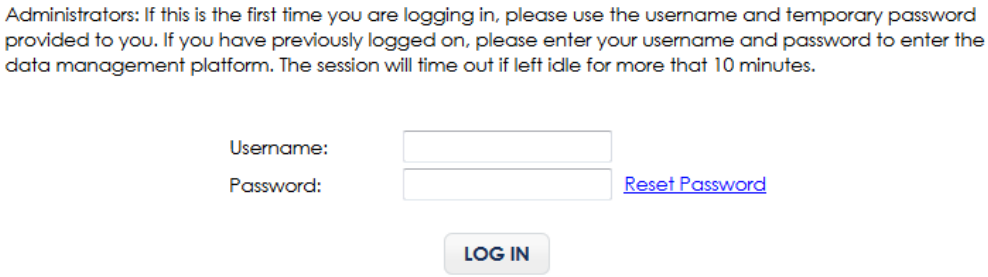
*A. To log into the Survey Administrator Dashboard:*

1. Open the SCLS website from a browser. Your IT staff will have created this website for you and should have provided you with the URL.

2. From the homepage, click on the ">> ADMINISTRATOR LOG IN" link from the toolbar on the home page.

Alternatively, as a shortcut users can enter "sclsadmin" in the "Username" text box and click on the "LOG IN" button.

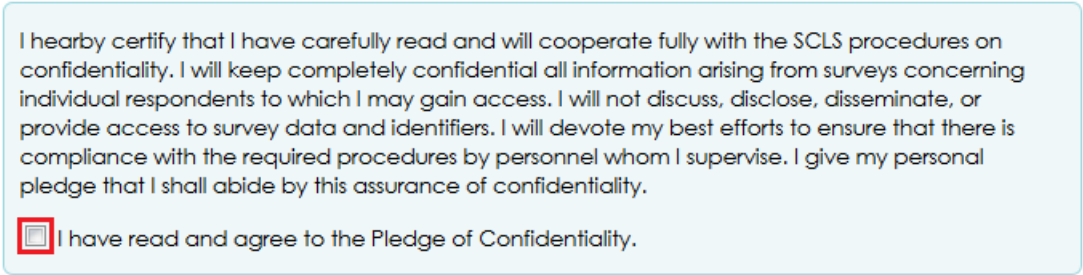
3. Enter "sclsadmin" in the "Username" text box.




4. If you are logging in for the first time, enter the temporary password "2@Password" in the "Password" text box. Otherwise, enter the new password you have chosen.

5. If you are logging in for the first time, check the "I have read and agree to the Pledge of Confidentiality." check box.

> Administrator passwords must be between 8 and 14 characters in length and contain
> - 1 uppercase English character,
> - 1 lowercase English character,
> - 1 numeric character, and
> - 1 special character




6. Click on the "LOG IN" button.

After logging in for the first time, you will be redirected to the Change Password page and prompted to change your temporary password.

*B. To change the password:*

1. Enter a new password in the "New Password" text box.

2. Enter the same new password in the "Retype New Password" text box.

3. Passwords will automatically be hidden when entered. To reveal (or unhide) the password characters, check the "Show Password" check box.

4. Click on the "SAVE" button.

*C. To reset the password or if you have forgotten your password:*

1. Click on the ">> ADMINISTRATOR LOG IN" link from the toolbar on the home page.

2. Enter "sclsadmin" in the "Username" text box.

3. Click on the "Reset Password" link.

4. An e-mail with a URL to reset the password will be sent to the e-mail address of the Survey Administrator that was specified on the Education Agency page (see 2.2.3 Education Agency). Click on the URL, or copy and paste the URL directly from the e-mail to a browser address bar to be taken to the reset password page.

5. Follow the instructions "To change the password" in this guide.

*D. To log out:*

1. Click on the "LOG OUT" link in the toolbar.

### 2.2.3 Education Agency

After logging in for the first time and changing your temporary password, you will be directed to the Education Agency page and prompted to enter information about the education agency that is hosting the SCLS surveys. This only needs to be done one time regardless of how many data collections are opened.

*A. To enter the education agency information:*

1. Select the level of the education agency from the "Level" drop-down box (state, school district, or school).

2. **If a state education agency is hosting the SCLS survey**, select the state from the "State" drop-down box.

**N O T E**

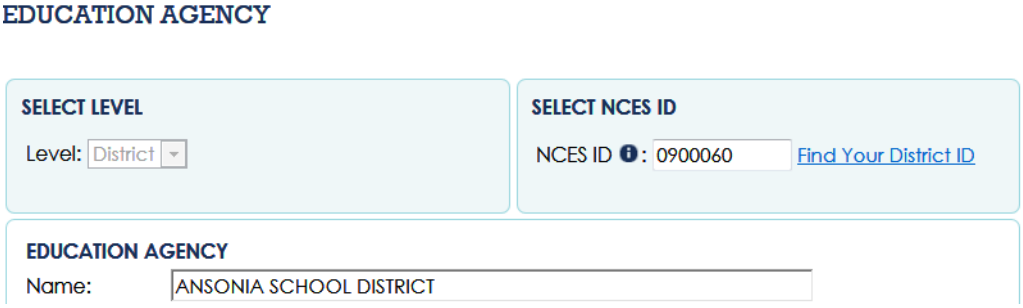
At the state level, the level and state cannot be changed once the "Save" button is clicked.

**If a school district is hosting the SCLS survey**, enter the school district's seven digit NCES district ID in the "NCES ID" text box. If you do not know the district's NCES ID,

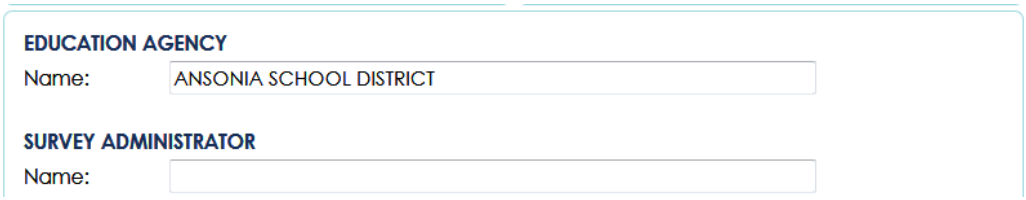
click on the “Find Your District ID” link to be redirected to the NCES Public School District Locator.

**If an individual school is hosting the SCLS survey**, enter the school’s twelve digit NCES school ID in the “NCES ID” text box. If you do not know the ID, click on the “Find Your School ID” link to be redirected to the NCES Public School Locator.

3. Under the Education Agency section, the name of the education agency is automatically pre-filled. To modify the name of the education agency, enter another name in the “Name” text box.




4. Under the Survey Administrator section, enter the name of the Survey Administrator in the “Name” text box.




5. Enter the e-mail address of the Survey Administrator in the “E-mail” text box.

**N O T E**

It is recommended that you use an e-mail address that was specifically created for the purpose of survey administration (e.g., scls@edagency.edu).

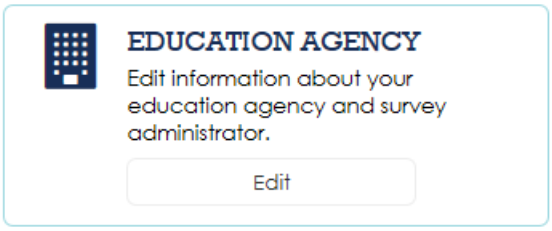
6. Enter the phone number of the Survey Administrator in the “Phone” text boxes.

**N O T E**

The Survey Administrator’s name, e-mail address, and phone number will be displayed on the home page.

7. Click on the “SAVE” button to save information about the education agency.

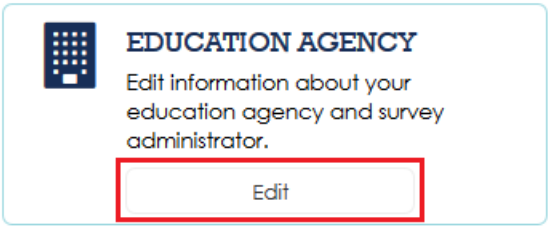
Once the education agency information has been saved for the first time, you will be directed to the dashboard. On the top left of the dashboard, you will see a section called "Education Agency".




The Survey Administrator can use this to edit information about the education agency at any time. For example, the name and contact information for the Survey Administrator that is provided to respondents can be updated. If an education agency administers SCLS multiple times (for example, one time each year), it is recommended that prior to each round of data collection the Survey Administrator information is reviewed for currency and accuracy.

*B. To edit the education agency information:*

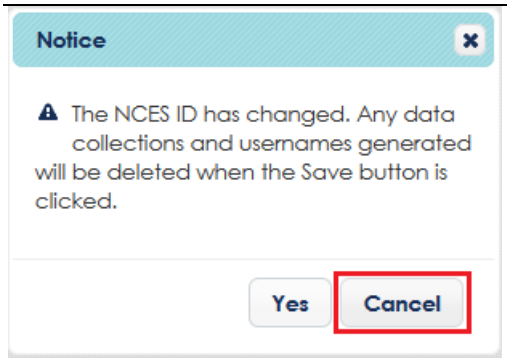
1. In the Education Agency section, click on the "Edit" menu button.




2. Edit the education agency and/or Survey Administrator information as instructed above in "*A. To enter the education agency information*" under 2.2.3 Education Agency.

**WARNING**

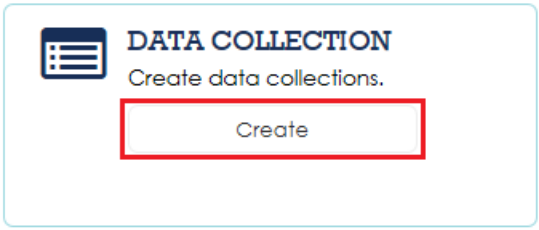
At the district and school levels, if the NCES ID is changed, any data collections and usernames generated will be deleted when the "SAVE" button is clicked. A warning box will pop up asking user to confirm the change. Click "Cancel" in the warning box if the change was accidental.

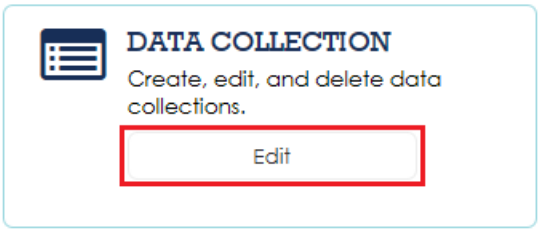



3. Click on the "SAVE" button.

### 2.2.4 Data Collection

On the top right of the dashboard you will see a section called “Data Collection”. This is the part of the dashboard that Survey Administrators can use to open, close, and delete data collections. Note that, if there are no open data collections, one data collection box will appear in your platform that has a “Create” button; however, if one or more data collections has already been created, an additional “Edit” button will be present, as shown below.

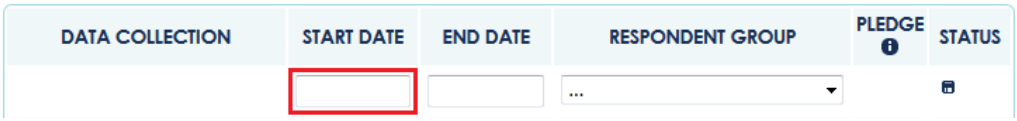



*A. To create a new data collection:*

1. In the Data Collection section, click on the “Create” button.

2. Click on the “START DATE” text box/date selector located on the top black row. Enter the start date of the data collection or select the start date from the date selector.




**N O T E**

The start date must be today’s date or later.

Refer to section 3.2 Setting Administration Window for suggested guidelines to consider when setting the data collection start and end date.

3. Click on the “END DATE” text box/date selector. Then enter the end date of the data collection or select the end date from the date selector.

**N O T E**

The end date cannot be earlier than the start date. A data collection will close on the end date at 11:59PM.

4. Select the respondent group from the “RESPONDENT GROUP” drop-down box. A unique data collection name is created based on the start date, end date, and respondent group.

5. If the student respondent group is selected, the "PLEDGE" drop-down will be displayed. Select the version of the confidentiality pledge to use. Survey Administrators will need to decide if students' responses will be linked to external data sources before setting up the student data collection.

   To view versions A (confidentiality pledge offered to students when links to student records are not preserved) and B (confidentiality pledge offered to students when links to student records are preserved) of the confidentiality pledge from the SCLS, click on the *Information* icon.

   Version A of the Confidentiality Pledge, offered to students when links to student records are not preserved, contains the following excerpt:

   > "The data you provide may also be used by your school and district to better understand the current climate in your school. The only people who will see your answers to individual questions are authorized personnel at your school and district (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Your answers will be combined with the answers of other students at your school and district and used to create records about the climate of your school. These reports will not identify any person or their responses."

   Version B of the Confidentiality Pledge, offered to students when links to student records are preserved, contains an alternate excerpt:

   > "The data you provide may also be used by your school and district to better understand the current climate in your school. The only people who will see your answers to individual questions are authorized personnel at your school and district (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Your answers will be combined with the answers of other students at your school and district and used to create records about the climate of your school. Although these reports will not identify any person or their responses, your data may be combined with other data about you to help your school to improve the climate of your school."

6. Click on the *Save* icon.

**N O T E**

Once a data collection has been created, the status is marked as "Not Started" until the date entered as the start date arrives, at which time the status will show as "Started." The status will change to "Closed" at 11:59 PM on the specified end date.

Multiple data collections can be created, however, the start date, end date, and respondent group must be unique. For example, two student surveys cannot be opened at the same time with the same start date and same end date.

*B. To edit a data collection:*

1. Edit the start date and/or end date of a data collection.

2. Click on the *Save* icon of the data collection to save the changes.

*C. To delete a data collection:*

1. Click on the *Delete* icon of the data collection to be deleted.

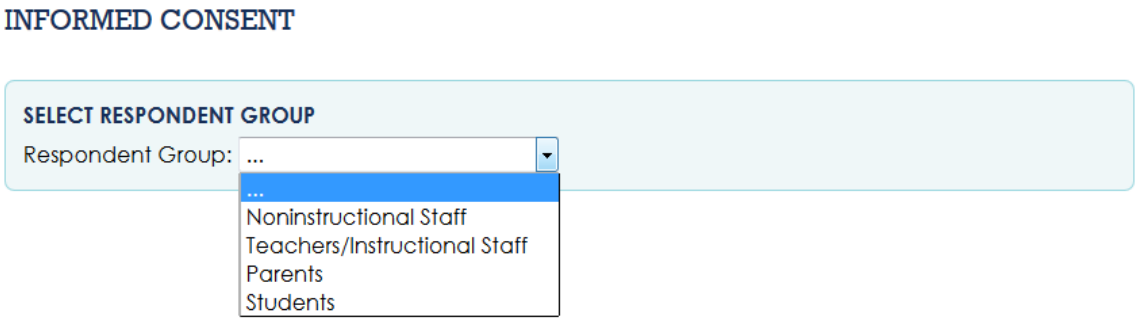
### 2.2.5 Informed Consent

The SCLS includes informed consent language to provide respondents with information about the study and their rights to participate or choose to not participate. Survey Administrators can add language to this page based on the needs of their school, district or state.

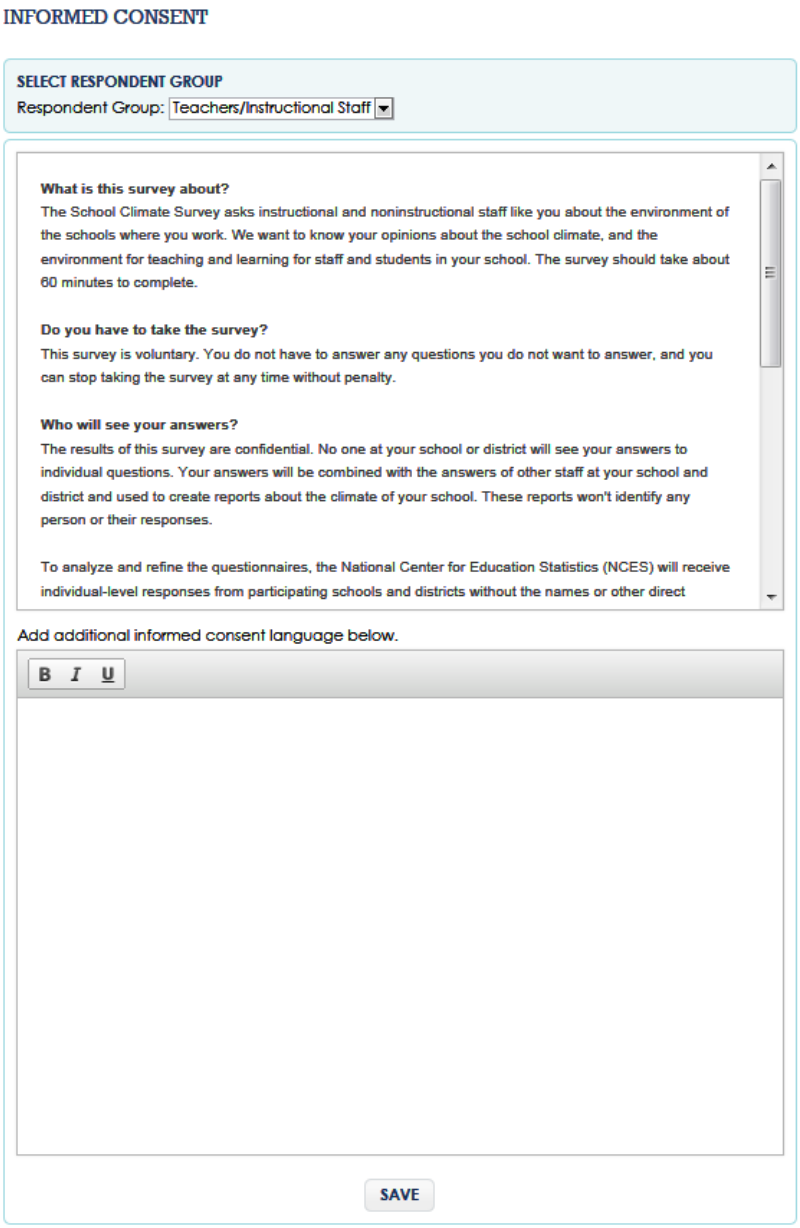
*A. To add language to the informed consent:*

1. Click on the "INFORMED CONSENT" link on the toolbar of the dashboard.

2. Select the respondent group from the "Respondent Group" drop-down box.

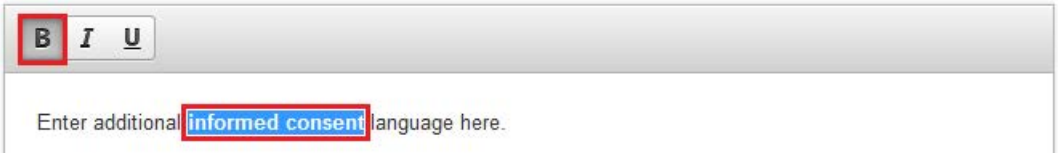


3. Enter additional language in the text area[6].



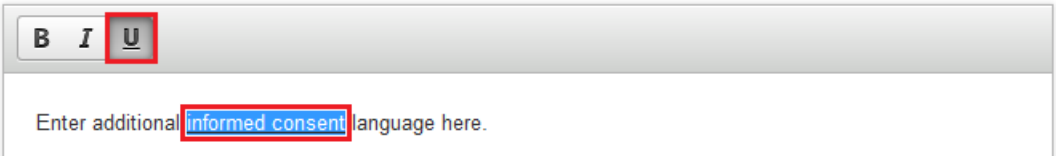

[6] Multiple versions of the consent language cannot be included in surveys conducted during the same data collection window.

4. To bold text, select the text and click on the *Bold* icon.




5. To italicize text, select the text and click on the *Italicize* icon.

6. To underline text, select the text and click on the *Underline* icon.

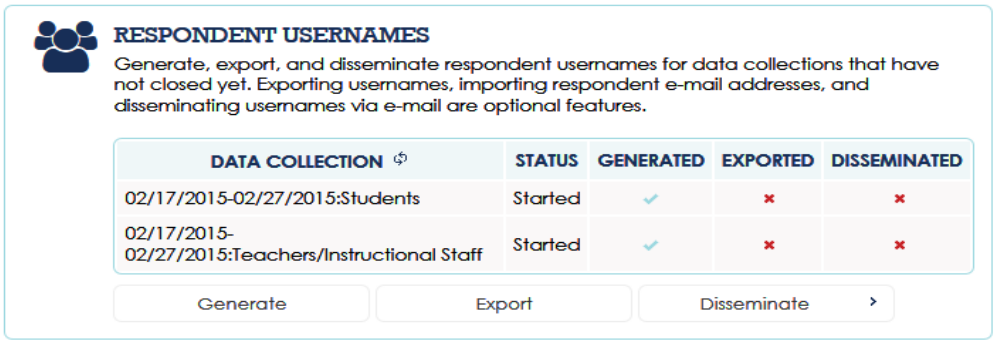



7. To toggle between the English and Spanish version of the consent language for student and parent respondent groups, click on the "English" and "Español" links.

8. Click on the "SAVE" button. The added language will appear at the end of the informed consent page.

### 2.2.6 Respondent Usernames

In the center of the dashboard's main page, you will see a box titled "RESPONDENT USERNAMES." Respondent usernames are generated randomly from the SCLS platform for each respondent group such that, when a respondent enters the username into the survey platform, they will be directed automatically to the appropriate survey (i.e., student, instructional staff, noninstructional staff [including principals], or parent/guardian). Through this boxed section of the Survey Administrator dashboard, these random usernames can be generated and exported.




The dashboard also provides Survey Administrators with an option to disseminate these random usernames to respondents' e-mail addresses. In order to use this option, Survey Administrators

must upload respondent e-mail addresses into the SCLS platform and use the SCLS to send individual survey invitations to respondents.

For each data collection, administrators will need to generate usernames for each respondent group in each school. This allows the SCLS platform to track and display survey submission statuses by school, which is an important tool in ensuring the success of a data collection.

The Respondent Usernames boxed section of the dashboard includes the following functionalities:

- **Generate** – Create usernames for a data collection
- **Export** – Save the list of generated usernames as a single CSV (comma-separated or character-separated values) file or multiple CSV files
- **Disseminate** – Import usernames and e-mail addresses into the SCLS platform for a data collection; and disseminate via the e-mail tool in SCLS

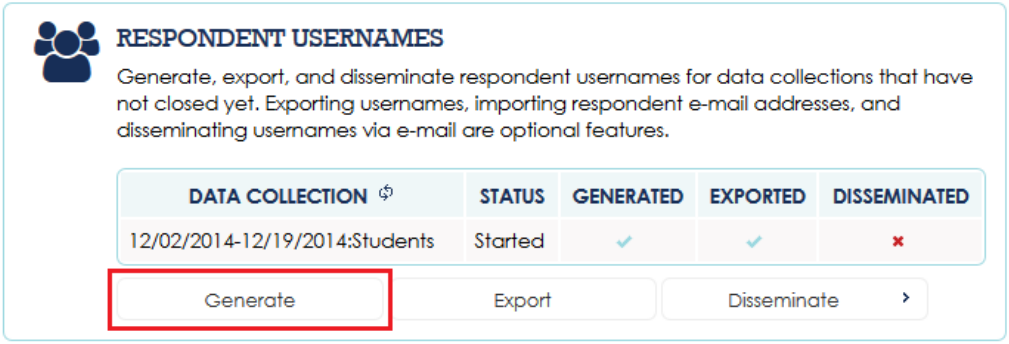
The general process works as follows. Survey Administrators use the SCLS to generate a certain number of usernames for each school. If multiple schools in a district or state are participating in the SCLS, usernames are generated for each school. Survey Administrators then export the randomly generated usernames in a CSV file(s), which can be opened with a text editor or Excel where each username can be paired with a respondent's e-mail address. With that done, Survey Administrators can then import the newly appended CSV file back into the SCLS platform. The end result is that the administrator can use the platform to send each respondent an e-mail with a unique username and an invitation to participate in SCLS.

This section of the dashboard also provides the status of each data collection that has not yet closed, and tracks whether usernames have been generated, exported, and disseminated.

See appendix B for more information on the role of the username dissemination feature in an SCLS administration.

*A. To generate usernames:*

1. In the Respondent Usernames section, click on the "Generate" menu button.

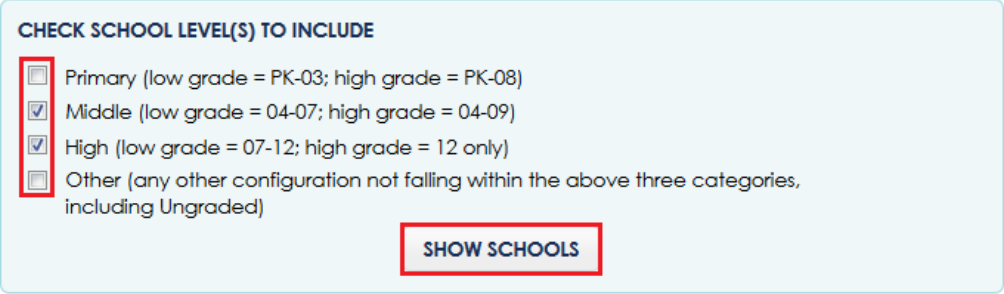



Alternatively, click on the "GENERATE" link from the toolbar on any Respondent Usernames page.

2. First, identify the data collection for which usernames are being generated. Select the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. Create a list of participating schools (district- or state-level Survey Administrators only[7]):

   a. To generate a pre-filled list of schools within the state or district, check at least one school level to include. Click on the "SHOW SCHOOLS" button.



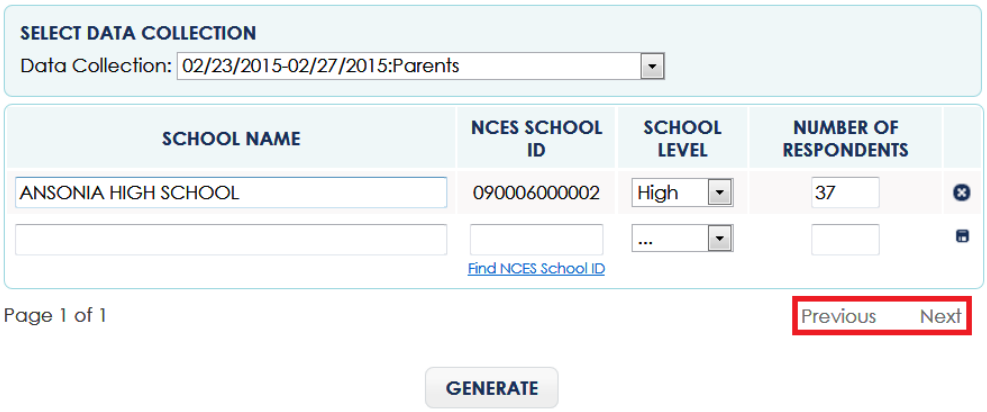

   b. Because SCLS contains a database of all schools in the United States based on the Common Core of Data (CCD) (http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/), the school name, NCES School ID, and school level will be automatically pre-filled for every school displayed.

      To edit the school name at the state or district level, enter another name in the "SCHOOL NAME" text box.

      To change the school level (e.g., middle school, high school), select another school level from the "SCHOOL LEVEL" drop-down box that appears to the right of the school name and NCES school ID.

[7] If an individual school is hosting the SCLS, the school name, NCES ID, and school grade level will be pre-filled; additional schools cannot be added.

c. To navigate between the pages of schools, click on the “Previous” or “Next” links.




4. Determine how many respondents are in each population and enter that number into the “NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS” text box for each school. For example, if there are 450 students enrolled in a school who will be invited to take the survey in that school, 450 usernames should be requested for that school. Note that a number greater than zero must be entered.

5. Click on the “GENERATE” button to generate usernames.

**N O T E**

Respondent usernames are 8 characters long, and are made up of lower case letters and numbers. Student usernames begin with the letter “s”; teachers/instructional staff begin with “t”; noninstructional staff begin with “n”; principals begin with “np”[8]; and parents/guardians begin with “p”.

It may take up to 10 seconds to generate 500 usernames, and 90 seconds to generate 5,000 usernames. On the dashboard, the Generated and Exported columns will be marked with check marks once all usernames for the data collection have been generated and exported. By default, usernames are exported into a single CSV file for each data collection.

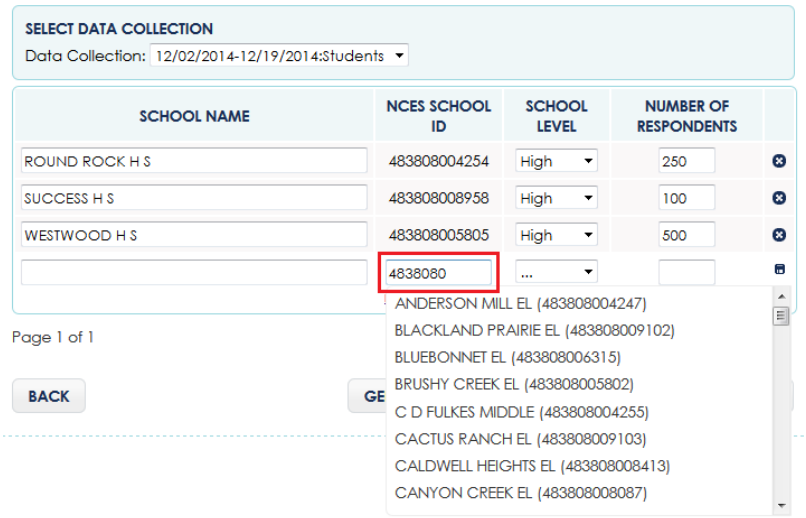
[8] One principal username is generated for each noninstructional staff data collection. Note that principals answer all items in the noninstructional staff survey, but there are several specific items set aside for principals only.

*B. To add a school to the data collection (district- and state-host levels only):*

1. Enter the NCES school ID into "NCES SCHOOL ID" auto-completer text box. If you do not know the ID, click on the "Find NCES School ID" link to be redirected to the NCES Public School Locator.

**N O T E**

At the state level, the first two digits of the NCES school ID must match the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Code of the state education agency. At the district level, the first seven digits of the NCES school ID must match the NCES ID of the district.




2. Select a school from the "NCES SCHOOL ID" auto-completer list, or enter another NCES school ID.

   If a school was selected from the "NCES SCHOOL ID" auto-completer list, the school name and school level will be pre-filled. Otherwise, the school name will be blank and school level will be unselected.

**N O T E**

The pre-filled school level is calculated from the school's corresponding low and high grade span values from the NCES Common Core of Data (CCD): Primary (low grade = PK–03; high grade = PK–08); Middle (low grade = 04–07; high grade = 04–09); High (low grade = 07–12; high grade = 12 only); Other (any other configuration not falling within the above three categories, including Ungraded).

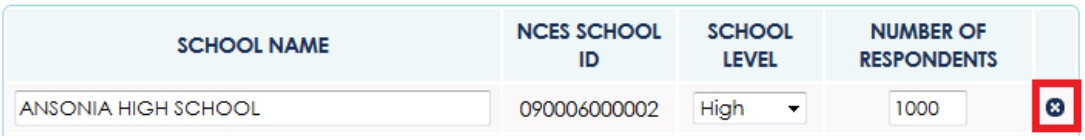
3. To edit or specify the school name, enter the name in the "SCHOOL NAME" text box.

4. To change or specify the school grade level, select a level from the "SCHOOL LEVEL" drop-down box.

5. Click on the *Save* icon.

*C. To delete a school (district- and state-host levels only):*

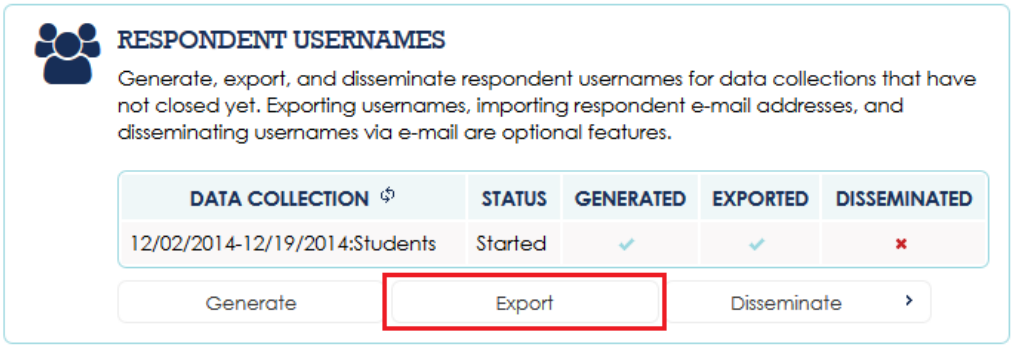
1. Click on the *Delete* icon of the school to be deleted.




Usernames can be exported in CSV file format. This file type can be opened with text editors (e.g., NotePad, WordPad, or TextEdit), Excel, and many programming applications. Once the usernames are in CSV file format, the Survey Administrator can hand them off to Survey Coordinators in each school[9], or the administrator can take the steps needed to e-mail survey invitations through the platform, as described below.

*D. To export usernames (file will be in CSV format):*

1. Under the Respondent Usernames section, click on the "Export" menu button.




Alternatively, click on the "EXPORT" link from the toolbar on any Respondent Usernames page.

2. Select the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. To generate multiple export files by school, check the "Multiple Files" check box.

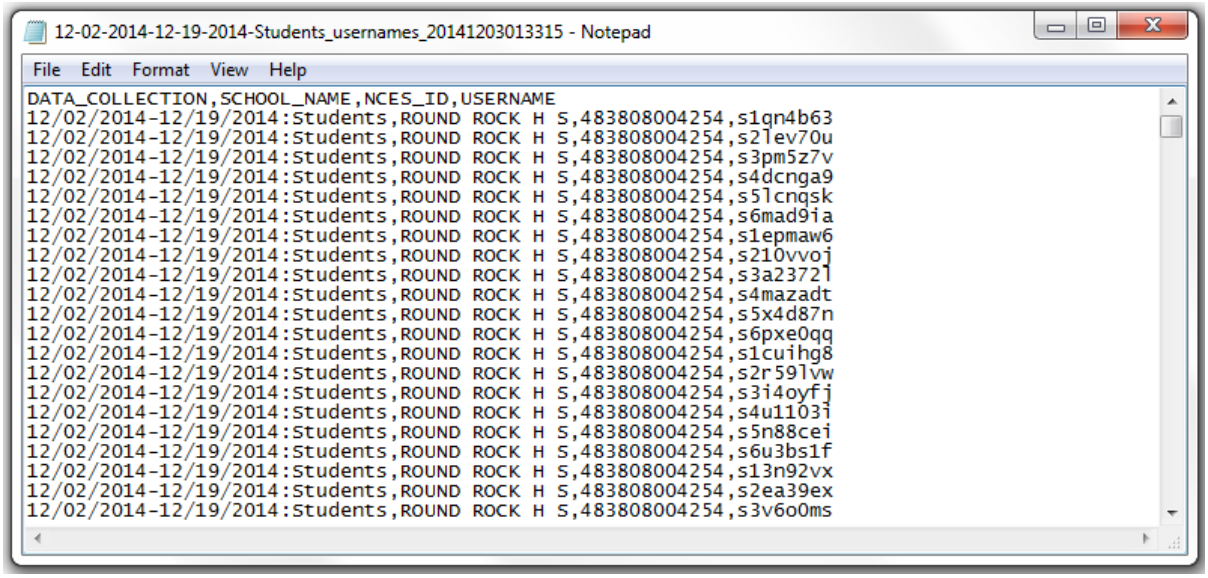
4. Click on the "EXPORT" button.

[9] If an education agency does not have the e-mails of a respondent group, it will need to use other means of getting each invitee a unique username. For example, following the instructions to export the usernames; then print them out and distribute the usernames on paper. Consider the guidance offered in 3.1 Preparing for the Survey Administration.

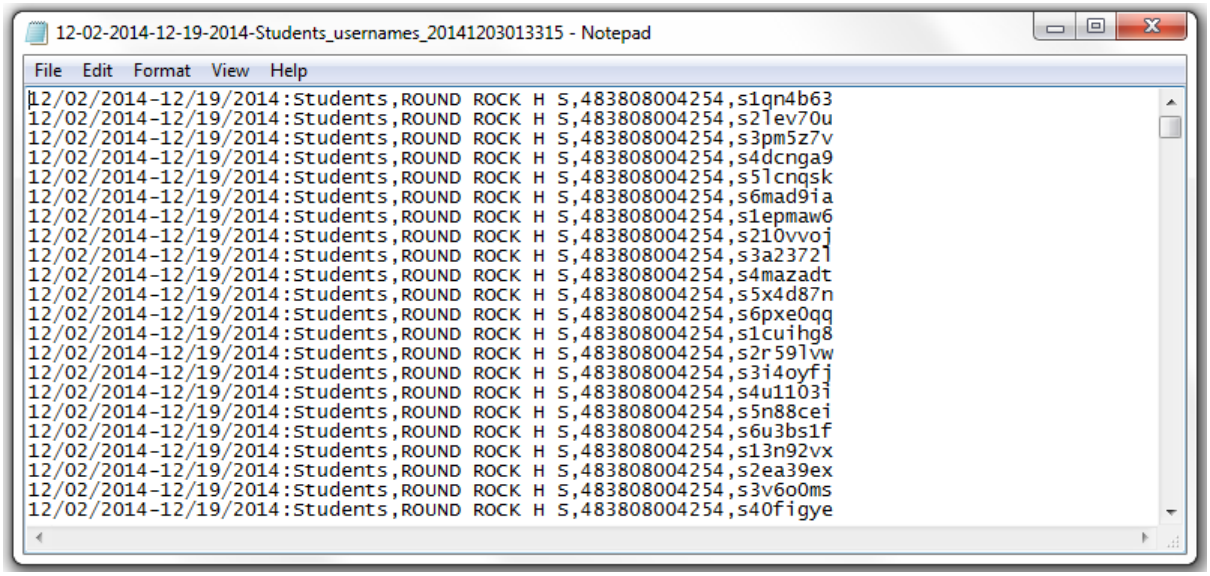
E-mail addresses and usernames can be merged using either a text editor or Excel.

*E. To merge e-mail addresses with usernames using a text editor:*

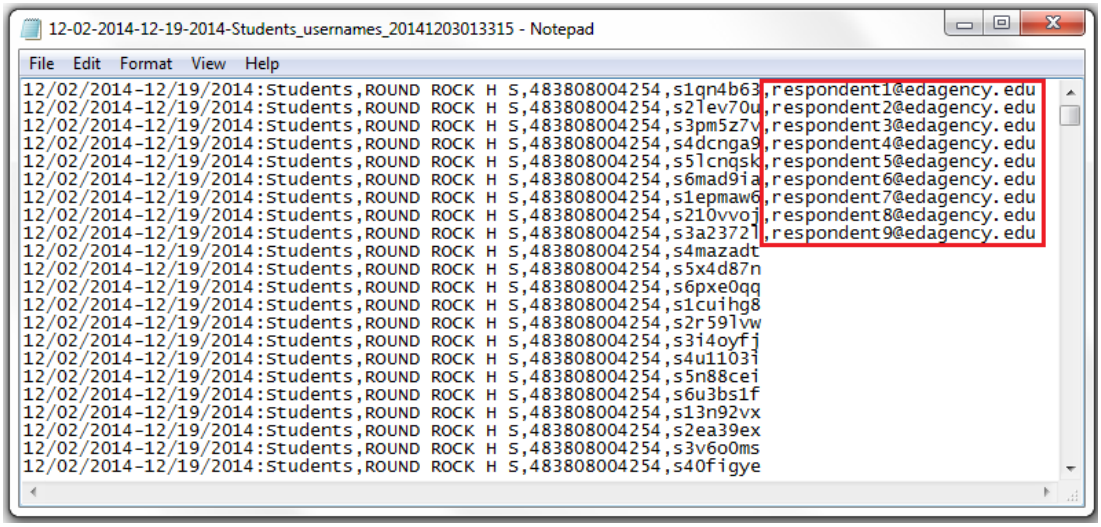
1. Open the exported usernames CSV file in a text-editor like Notepad, WordPad, or TextEdit.



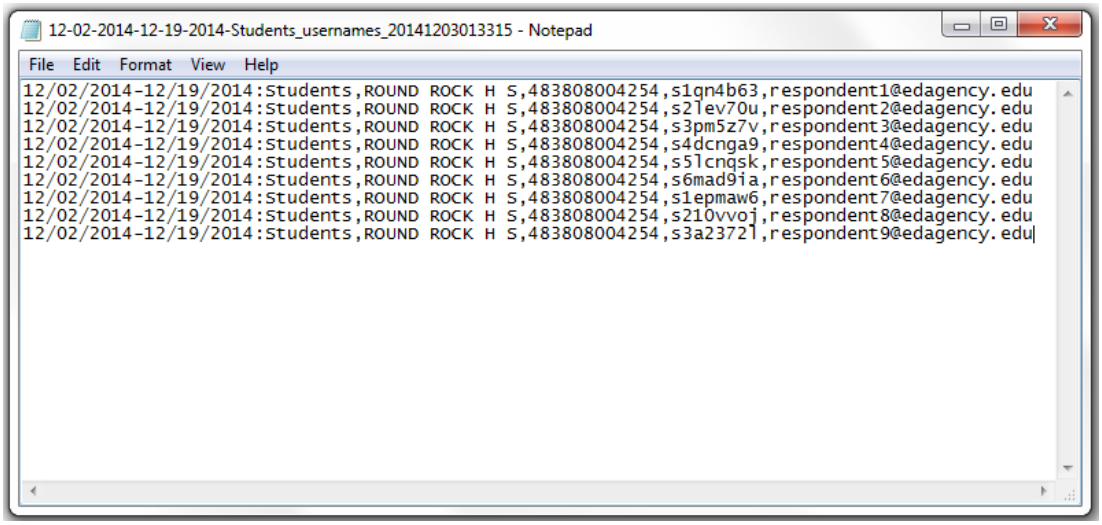

2. Delete the first row which contains the column headers (i.e., DATA_COLLECTION, SCHOOL_NAME, etc.).



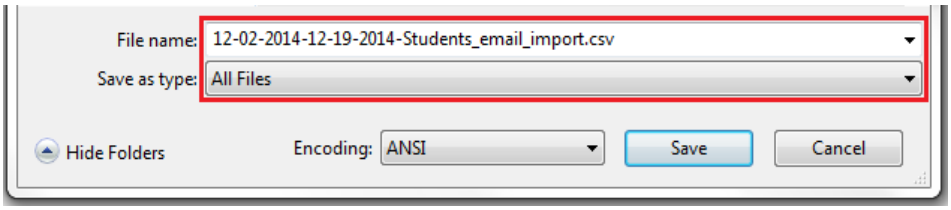
3. After each username, enter “,” and the e-mail address.




4. Delete any rows that do not have an e-mail assigned to a username.




5. When saving the file, enter a file name, followed by “.csv”, and select “All Files” from the “Save as type” drop-down box.




6. Click on the “Save” button.

*F. To merge e-mail addresses with usernames using Excel:*

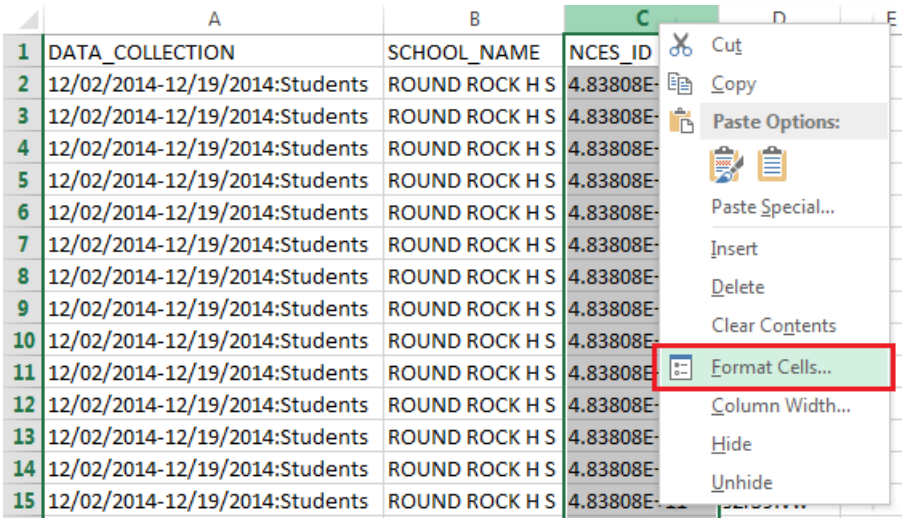
1. Open the exported usernames CSV file in a Microsoft Excel document.

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | DATA_COLLECTION | SCHOOL_NAME | NCES_ID | USERNAME |
| 2 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s1qn4b63 |
| 3 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s2lev70u |
| 4 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s3pm5z7v |
| 5 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s4dcnga9 |
| 6 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s5lcnqsk |
| 7 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s6mad9ia |
| 8 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s1epmaw6 |
| 9 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s210vvoj |
| 10 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 4.83808E+11 | s3a2372l |

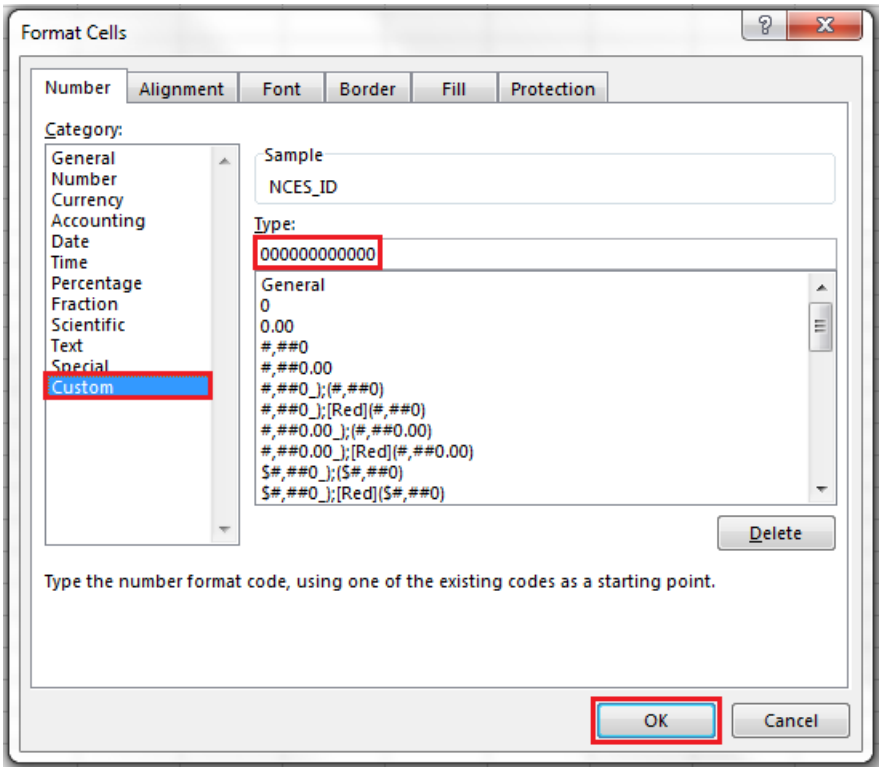
**N O T E**

The NCES ID will be shown in scientific notation in Excel by default. The administrator will have to complete step 2 below in order to change it back to its original form. The file cannot be imported back into SCLS in usable form without completing this step.

2. To convert the NCES ID to a text column, select column C (NCES_ID), right-click, and select “Format Cells…”.



3. From the Format Cells window, select “Custom” for the “Category” and type 12 zeroes (i.e., “000000000000”) directly into the “Type” text box. Then click the on “OK” button.




4. Delete the first row, which contains the column headers (i.e., DATA_COLLECTION, SCHOOL_NAME, etc.). The end result should be raw data, like the sample seen below.

| | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1qn4b63 |
| 2 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s2lev70u |
| 3 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3pm5z7v |
| 4 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s4dcnga9 |
| 5 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s5lcnqsk |
| 6 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s6mad9ia |
| 7 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1epmaw6 |
| 8 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s210vvoj |
| 9 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3a2372l |
| 10 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s4mazadt |

5. Enter the e-mail addresses in column E.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1qn4b63 | respondent1@edagency.edu |
| 2 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s2lev70u | respondent2@edagency.edu |
| 3 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3pm5z7v | respondent3@edagency.edu |
| 4 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s4dcnga9 | respondent4@edagency.edu |
| 5 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s5lcnqsk | respondent5@edagency.edu |
| 6 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s6mad9ia | respondent6@edagency.edu |
| 7 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1epmaw6 | respondent7@edagency.edu |
| 8 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s210vvoj | respondent8@edagency.edu |
| 9 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3a2372l | respondent9@edagency.edu |
| 10 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s4mazadt | |
| 11 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s5x4d87n | |
| 12 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s6pxe0qq | |
| 13 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1cuihg8 | |
| 14 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s2r59lvw | |
| 15 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3i4oyfj | |

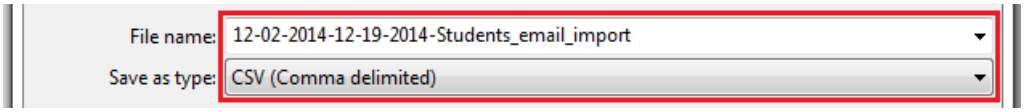
**N O T E**

District- and state-level Survey Administrators may need to establish their own logistics chains to acquire respondents' e-mail lists from school and/or districts, depending on where such data are stored. Consider the logistics chain recommended in 3.1 Preparing for the Survey Administration.

6. Delete any rows that do not have an e-mail assigned to a username.

| | A | B | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1qn4b63 | respondent1@edagency.edu |
| 2 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s2lev70u | respondent2@edagency.edu |
| 3 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3pm5z7v | respondent3@edagency.edu |
| 4 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s4dcnga9 | respondent4@edagency.edu |
| 5 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s5lcnqsk | respondent5@edagency.edu |
| 6 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s6mad9ia | respondent6@edagency.edu |
| 7 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s1epmaw6 | respondent7@edagency.edu |
| 8 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s210vvoj | respondent8@edagency.edu |
| 9 | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014:Students | ROUND ROCK H S | 483808004254 | s3a2372l | respondent9@edagency.edu |
| 10 | | | | | |
| 11 | | | | | |
| 12 | | | | | |
| 13 | | | | | |
| 14 | | | | | |
| 15 | | | | | |

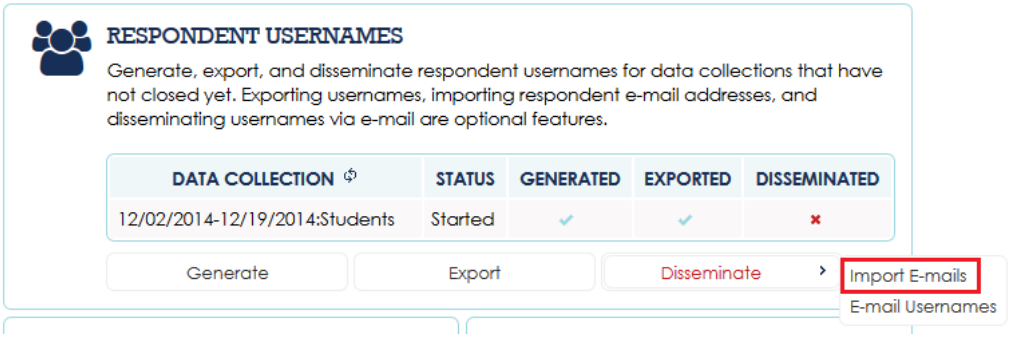
7. When saving the file, enter a file name and select "CSV (Comma delimited)" from the "Save as type" drop-down box in order to import back into the SCLS platform.




8. Click on the "Save" button.

*G. To import the merged usernames-with-e-mails CSV file:*

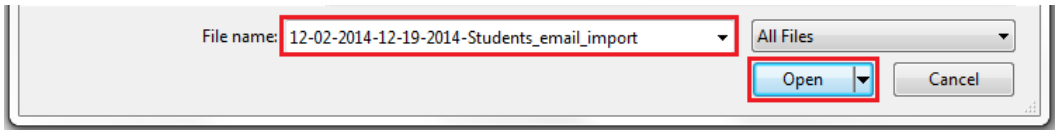
1. Under the Respondent Usernames section, click on the “Import E-mails” option from the “Disseminate” menu.




2. Select the data collection from the “Data Collection” drop-down box.

3. Click on the “Browse…” button to open the File Upload window.

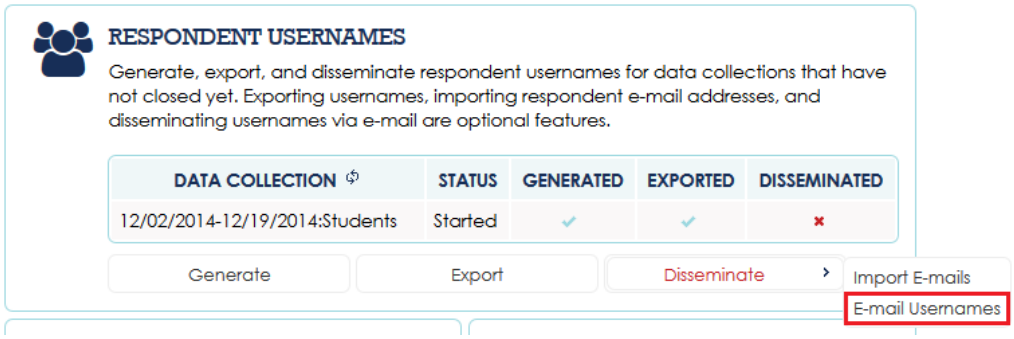
4. Select the e-mail CSV file to import and click on the “Open” button.




5. Click on the “IMPORT FILE” button.

*H. To disseminate the usernames via the e-mail tool in the SCLS:*

1. Under the Respondent Usernames section, click on the “E-mail Username” option from the “Disseminate” menu.




2. Select the data collection from the “Data Collection” drop-down box.

3. The “Send to new recipients only” check box is checked by default. Uncheck to send follow-up or reminder e-mails to recipients who previously received e-mails.

4. Enter the e-mail subject in the “Subject” text box.

5. Modify the e-mail message in the “Message” text area, including replacing “{Please insert the link to your survey}”.

6. Click on the “SEND” button.

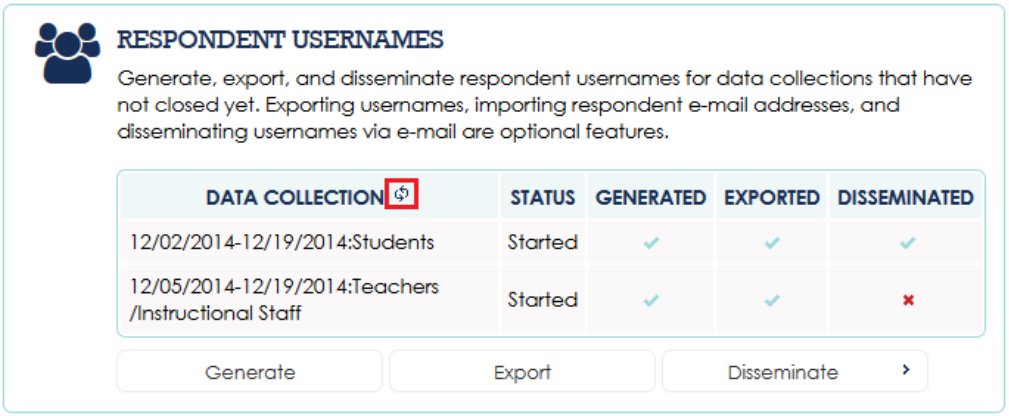
**N O T E**

On the dashboard, the “Disseminated” column will be marked with a check mark once all usernames for the data collection have been disseminated via the e-mail tool in SCLS. Please note that the platform does not know if the emails have been successfully delivered. Survey Administrators will need to coordinate with their IT staff to track any e-mails that may be returned as undeliverable.

Administrators will need to refresh the Data Collection table to check the latest status of the usernames.

*I. To refresh the data collection table after usernames have been generated, exported, and/or disseminated:*

1. Click on the *Refresh* icon.




### 2.2.7 Reports

On the bottom left of the dashboard home page, you will see a section of the dashboard titled “REPORTS”. This is where Survey Administrators can produce real-time survey status reports during a data collection, and produce reports of the survey results immediately after the close of data collection.[10]

[10] For the pilot study, only the survey submission reports and item frequency reports are immediately available in the system. Scale scores will be provided to participating schools/districts only after the pilot data have been analyzed, in Fall 2015.

### 2.2.7.1 Survey Status Reports

Once a data collection has started, two types of real-time survey status reports can be viewed and exported:

(1) Submission Rate Reports
(2) Case Disposition Reports

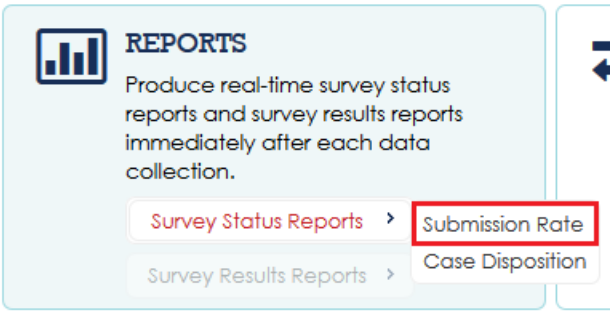
Submission Rate Reports:
The survey submission rate report shows the number of usernames generated, the number of incomplete surveys, the number of unused usernames, and the overall submission rate. These submission status reports can be used to help Survey Administrators monitor the data collections and make informed decisions about needed follow up efforts. Refer to 3.4 During Administration to learn how the survey submission rate report can be used to provide continued communication during administration and optimize response rates.

Case Disposition Reports:
It may be useful for Survey Administrators to have access to more granular information about individual case dispositions, in order to supplement the information displayed in submission status reports. For example, if an education agency chooses to keep track of which usernames were given to which students, having detailed information on the status of individual usernames (e.g., complete, partial, and unused) can help to target the agency's nonresponse follow-up efforts.

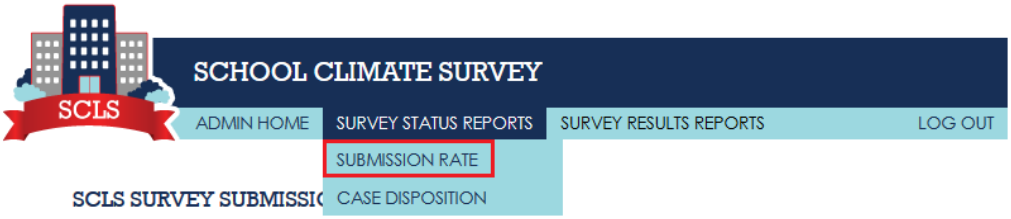
Case disposition reports can be generated in one of three ways: (1) directly through the submission status report tables, (2) through the reporting section on the main page of the Survey Administrator dashboard, or (3) through the "survey status reports" button on the toolbar of any reports page.

*A. To view the submission rate report:*

1. Under the Reports section of the dashboard, click on the "Submission Rate" option from the "Survey Status Reports" menu.




Alternatively, click on the "SUBMISSION RATE" option under the "SURVEY STATUS REPORTS" menu from the toolbar on any Reports page.



2. To show graphical submission status information for all data collections at the state or district level, click on the *Expand* icon on the header row.

| | DATA COLLECTION | TOTAL USERNAMES GENERATED | NUMBER OF SUBMITTED SURVEYS | NUMBER OF INCOMPLETE SURVEYS | NUMBER OF UNUSED USERNAMES | SURVEY SUBMISSION RATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014: Students | 850 | 8 | 18 | 824 | 0.94% |
| | 12/05/2014-12/19/2014: Teachers/Instructional Staff | 80 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 0.00% |

3. To show graphical data for a single data collection at the state or district level, click on the *Expand* icon for that data collection.

| | DATA COLLECTION | TOTAL USERNAMES GENERATED | NUMBER OF SUBMITTED SURVEYS | NUMBER OF INCOMPLETE SURVEYS | NUMBER OF UNUSED USERNAMES | SURVEY SUBMISSION RATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 12/02/2014-12/19/2014: Students | 850 | 8 | 18 | 824 | 0.94% |
| | 12/05/2014-12/19/2014: Teachers/Instructional Staff | 80 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 0.00% |

**N O T E**

The definition of each column header is as follows:

**Total Usernames Generated**: For each survey being administered (i.e., student, parent, instructional staff, or noninstructional staff [including principals]), the number of usernames that have been generated will be shown. Depending on the level of the education agency that is hosting the surveys (school, district, or state), the total number of usernames can be displayed at the school, district, or state level.

**Number of Submitted Surveys**: Cases that are assigned a disposition status of "submitted" include those where a respondent has logged in to the survey, consented to participate, and responded to all survey items, thereby completing the survey. Submissions also include finalized cases that do not meet the SCLS definition of a completed interview, including those where a respondent has declined to participate at the consent page and those where a respondent viewed all survey items and proceeded to the "thank you" screen, but did not provide valid responses to a sufficient number of items to be classified as a completed interview. This number will provide Survey Administrators with a count of the number of respondents who have finalized their survey.

The sum of the total number of unused log-in credentials; the total number of log-ins, not yet submitted; and the total number of survey submissions will equal the total number of log-in credentials generated.

**Number of Incomplete Surveys**: Once a username is used to log in to a survey, the case will be assigned a disposition status of "logged in, not submitted." This status will include cases typically considered "partial completes." Cases assigned this status may include those where respondents have logged in to the survey but not yet consented to participate, where respondents have consented to participate but not yet responded to any survey items, and where respondents have responded to survey items, but have not yet viewed the final "thank you" screen. This number will provide Survey Administrators with a count of the number of respondents who have started, but not yet finalized the survey.

**Number of Unused Usernames**: Usernames that have been assigned but not used to access the survey will be displayed in the survey status report. This will provide administrators with an estimate of the number of respondents who have not yet attempted to take the survey.

**Survey Submission Rate**: To provide Survey Administrators with an estimate of the percentage of respondents who have finalized the survey, the survey status tool will also compute and display a survey submission rate.[11] The survey submission rate is calculated as

$$100 * (S / C),$$

where $S$ = the total number of survey submissions and $C$ = the total number of log-in credentials generated for the survey.

[11] Submission rates will not be calculated by respondent demographic subgroups, as survey log-in and submission status will not be linked to survey data containing demographic information.

4. To hide detailed data for a single data collection at the state or district level, click on the *Collapse* icon on the header row.

| DATA COLLECTION | TOTAL USERNAMES GENERATED | NUMBER OF SUBMITTED SURVEYS | NUMBER OF INCOMPLETE SURVEYS | NUMBER OF UNUSED USERNAMES | SURVEY SUBMISSION RATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12/02/2014-12/19/2014: Students | 850 | 8 | 18 | 824 | 0.94% |
| ROUND ROCK H S | 250 | 5 | 6 | 239 | 2.00% |
| SUCCESS H S | 100 | 0 | 2 | 98 | 0.00% |
| WESTWOOD H S | 500 | 3 | 10 | 487 | 0.60% |
| 12/05/2014-12/19/2014: Teachers/Instructional Staff | 80 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 0.00% |
| ROUND ROCK H S | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0.00% |
| SUCCESS H S | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0.00% |
| WESTWOOD H S | 35 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 0.00% |

5. To export the case disposition details, click on a link on the completion rate table, then click on the "EXCEL", "CSV", or "PDF menu option.

| DATA COLLECTION | TOTAL USERNAMES GENERATED | NUMBER OF SUBMITTED SURVEYS | NUMBER OF INCOMPLETE SURVEYS | NUMBER OF UNUSED USERNAMES | SURVEY SUBMISSION RATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12/02/2014-12/19/2014: Students | 850 | 8 | 18 | 824 | 0.94% |
| ROUND ROCK H S | 250 | 5 | 6 | 239 | 2.00% |
| SUCCESS H S | 100 | 0 | 2 | 98 | 0.00% |
| WESTWOOD H S | 500 | 3 | 0 | 487 | 0.60% |
| 12/05/2014-12/19/2014: Teachers/Instructional Staff | 80 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 0.00% |
| ROUND ROCK H S | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 0.00% |
| SUCCESS H S | 15 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 0.00% |
| WESTWOOD H S | 35 | 0 | 0 | 35 | 0.00% |

EXCEL
CSV
PDF

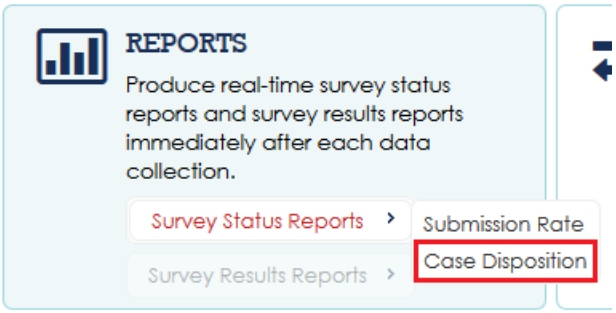
**NOTE**

Whenever the EXCEL, CSV, or PDF file format option is offered, choose based on what you intend to do with the file. The PDF format is ideal for printing out. The EXCEL format can be used to create your own graphics such as pie charts or graphs (as recommended in 3.4 During Administration to share with respondents and increase participation rates). The CSV format is offered because it works in many programming applications, allowing Survey Administrators to conduct their own analytics beyond those offered in SCLS.

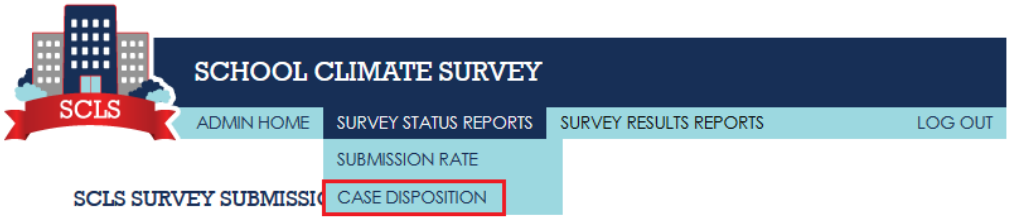
6. To refresh the report to show the very latest real-time data, click on the *Refresh* icon.

*B. To view and export the case disposition status report:*

1. Under the Reports section of the Survey Administrator dashboard, click on the "Case Disposition" option from the "Survey Status Reports" menu.




Alternatively, click on the "CASE DISPOSITION" option under the "SURVEY STATUS REPORTS" menu from the toolbar on any Reports page.



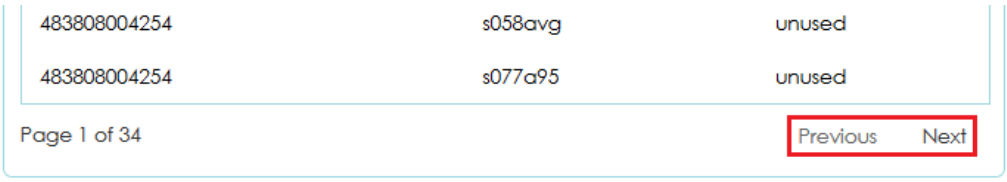

2. Click on the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. To filter by case disposition status, select a status from the "Status" drop-down box.

**N O T E**

The status can be "Unused," "Partial," or "Complete." "Unused" usernames have never been used to log into the system. "Partial" usernames have been used to log in and begin the survey, but have not been used to complete and submit the survey. "Complete" usernames have been used to complete and submit the survey. Refusals are included in the "Complete" usernames.

4. To navigate between the pages of cases, click on the "Previous" or "Next" links.




5. To export the report, click on the "Excel", "CSV", or "PDF" option from the "Export" menu.

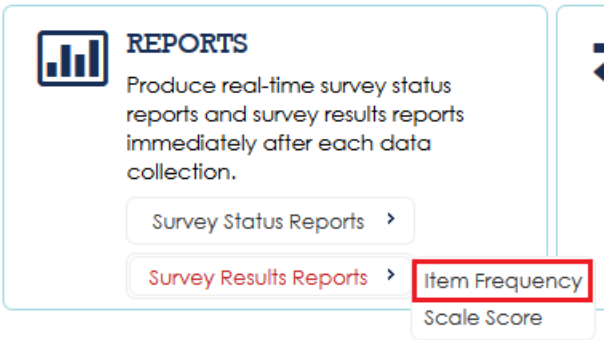
### 2.2.7.2 Survey Results Reports

Once a data collection has closed, survey results reports, including graphical displays (bar graphs) of item-level frequencies and scale scores (not available during pilot testing), can be viewed. The current version of SCLS does not allow these graphical displays to be exported, so administrators who want visual representations of the results will need to rely on screen-captures or create their own graphical displays from the exported raw data (see 2.2.8 Respondent-Level Survey Results for steps to export raw data).

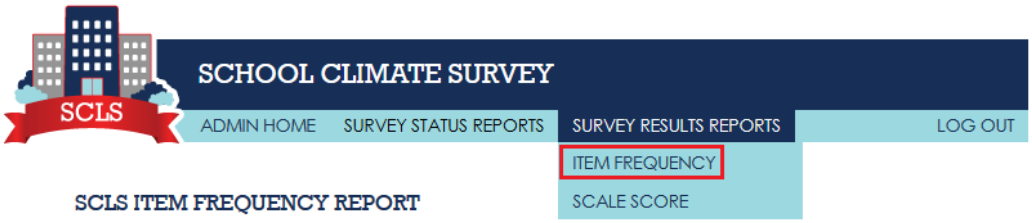
Univariate and crosstab distributions for demographic variables, such as grade (students only), gender and race/ethnicity are available for student, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff data collections. For the 2015 Pilot, crosstab distributions cannot be exported.

*A. To view and export the item frequency report:*

1. Under the Reports section, click on the "Item Frequency" option from the "Survey Results Reports" menu.




Alternatively, click on the "ITEM FREQUENCY" option under the "SURVEY RESULTS REPORTS" menu from the toolbar on any Reports page.



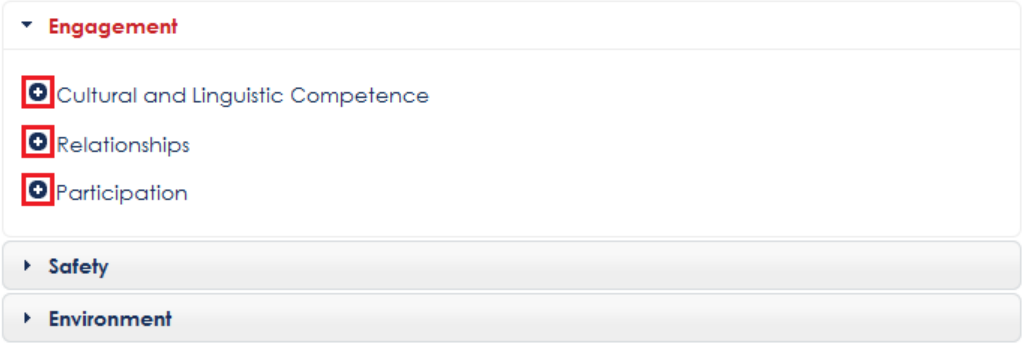

**N O T E**

Item frequencies refer to the distribution of responses for each item.

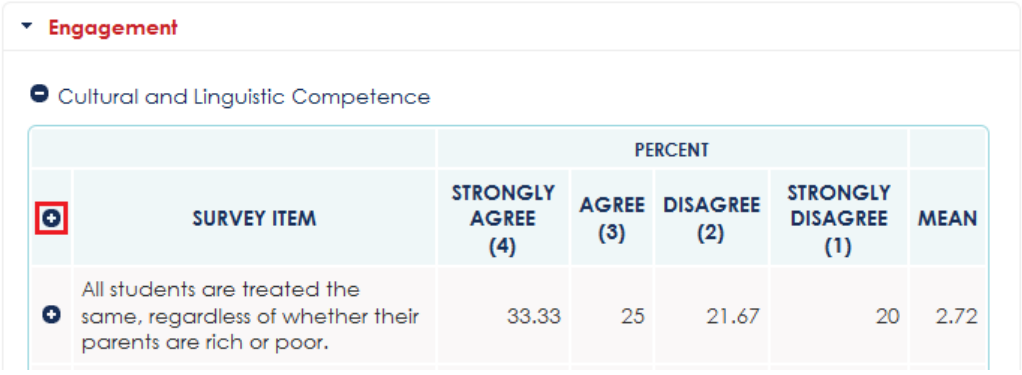
2. States hosting the SCLS surveys will have the option of filtering by the district or school levels. Districts hosting the SCLS will have the option of filtering by the school level. To filter by district (or school), select the district (or school) from the drop-down box.

3. Click on the "GENERATE REPORT" button.

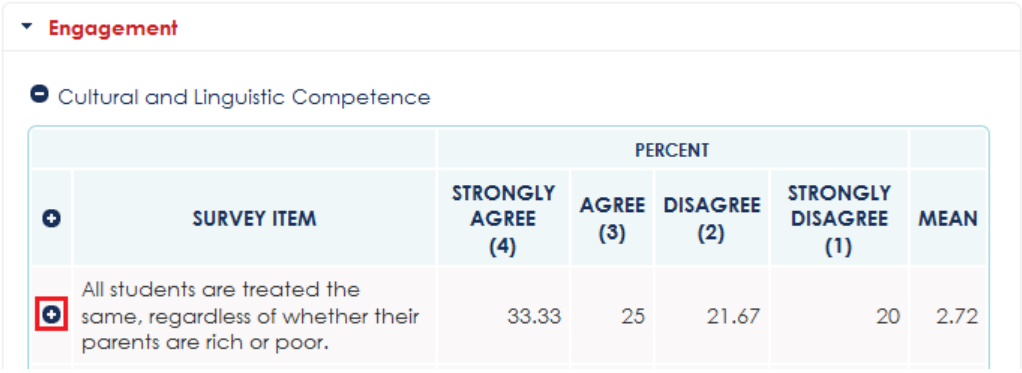
4. To show item frequencies and graphical displays for a topical area within a domain, click on the *Expand* icon.




To show graphical data for all survey items within a topical area, click on the *Expand* icon in the header row.

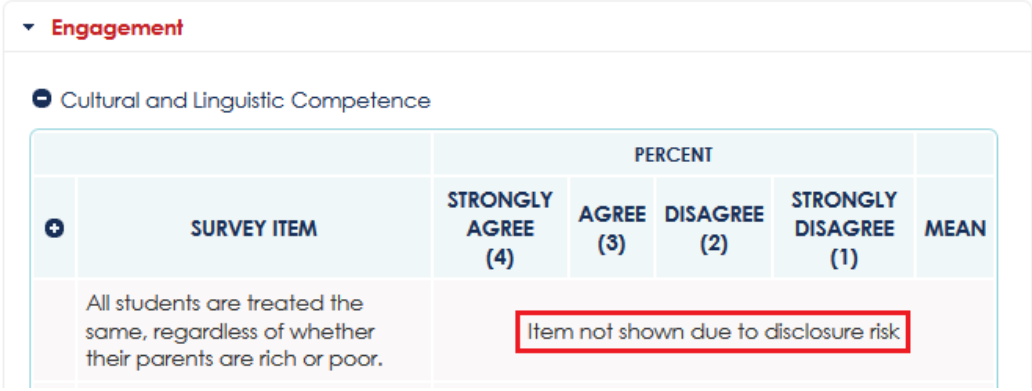



To show the graphical display for a single survey item within a topical area, click on the *Expand* icon for the survey item.

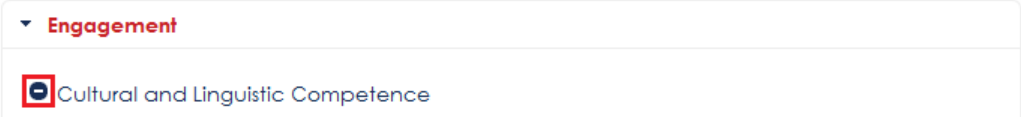


**NOTE**

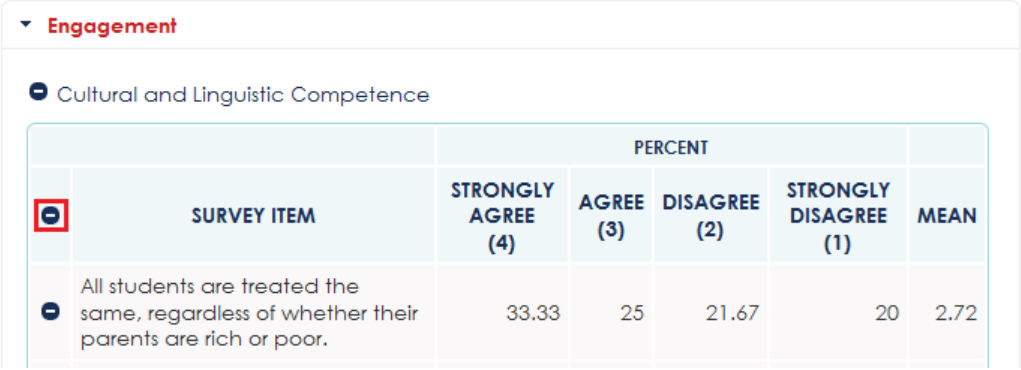
To protect the confidentiality of respondents, and to provide meaningful data, frequency distributions will not be shown for an item with fewer than 10 respondents. Instead, "Item not shown due to disclosure risk" is displayed.




5. To hide item frequencies and graphical displays for a topical area, click on the *Collapse* icon.

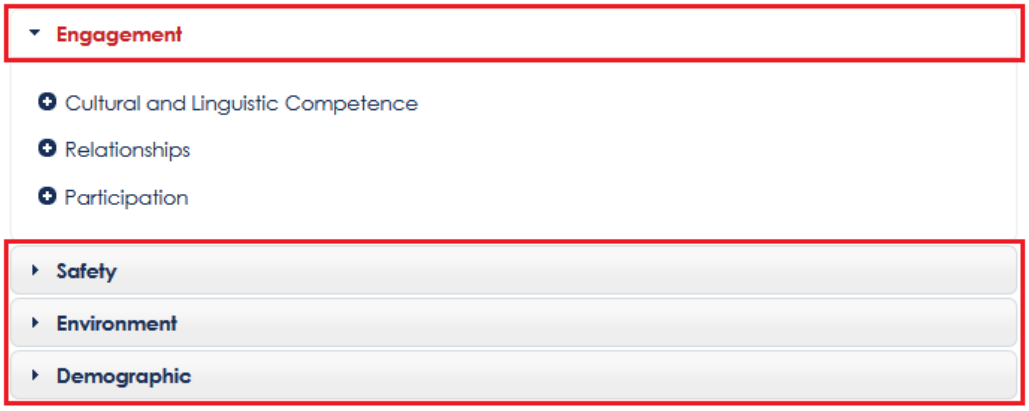



To hide frequencies and graphical displays for all survey items within a topical area, click on the collapse icon button on the header row.



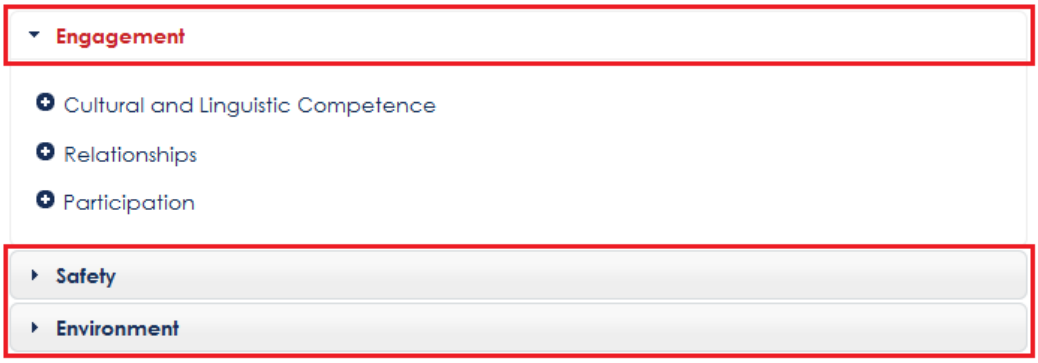
To hide the graphical display for a single survey item within a topical area, click on the *Collapse* icon for the survey item.

6. To view data for a domain, click on a domain header.




**N O T E**

The demographic domain, available for student, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals) is not available for parent data collections.



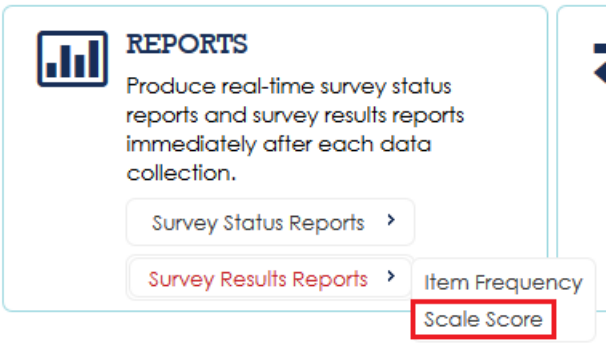

7. To export the report, click on the “Excel”, “CSV”, or “PDF” option from the “Export” menu.

**N O T E**

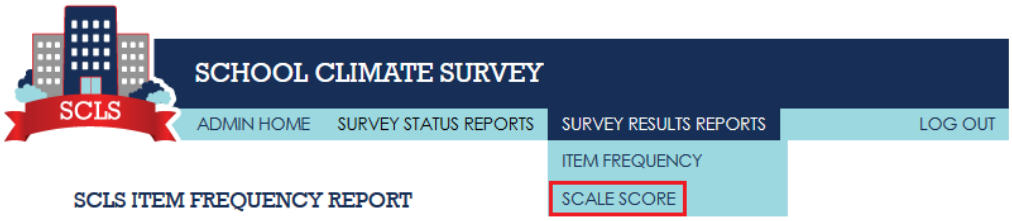
The export feature is available when valid data (i.e., not suppressed because of disclosure risk) have been collected for at least one survey item. The data exported will be in raw format regardless of the file type chosen.

*B. To view and export the scale score report:*[12]

1. Under the Reports section of the Survey Administrator dashboard, click on the "Scale Score" option from the "Survey Results Reports" menu.




Alternatively, click on the "SCALE SCORE" option under the "SURVEY RESULTS REPORTS" menu from the toolbar on any Reports page.




2. Select the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. Select the domain from the "Domain" drop-down box.

4. Select the topical area from the "Topical Area" drop-down box.

5. To filter by district at the state level, select the district from the "District" drop-down box.

6. To filter by school at the state level, select the school from the "School" drop-down box.

7. To filter by grade, check a "Grade" checkbox.

8. To filter by gender, select the gender from the "Gender" drop-down-box.

9. To filter by race/ethnicity, select the race/ethnicity from the "Race/Ethnicity" drop-down-box.

10. Click on the "GENERATE REPORT" button.

11. To export the report, click on the "Excel", "CSV", or "PDF" option from the "Export" menu.

[12] Scale score reports are not available in the pilot version of the SCLS platform.

### 2.2.8 Respondent-Level Survey Results

On the bottom right of the dashboard there is a boxed section titled "SURVEY RESULTS." Respondent-level survey results can be exported and imported to allow schools to provide data to districts, and districts to states. The export data will contain the original system-generated usernames for student respondents only in order to allow data to be linked to student records if an education agency chooses to keep track of which students were given which usernames (external to the SCLS platform). The original usernames for parents/guardians, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals) are replaced with random numbers to prevent any linkages.

*A. To export survey results to a CSV file:*

1. In the Survey Results section, click on the "Export" button.

Alternatively, click on the "EXPORT SURVEY RESULTS" link from the toolbar on any Survey Results page.

2. Select the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. Check the "I have read and agree to the Pledge of Confidentiality" check box.

4. Click on the "EXPORT" button. Refer to the SCLS codebook to view the definitions and valid values for each variable name.

*B. To import a survey results CSV file[13]:*

1. Under the Survey Results section, click on the "Import" button.

Alternatively, click on the "IMPORT SURVEY RESULTS" link from the toolbar on any Survey Results page.

2. Select the data collection from the "Data Collection" drop-down box.

3. Click on the "Browse…" button to open the File Upload window.

4. Select the survey results CSV file to import and click on the "Open" button.

5. Click on the "IMPORT" button.

[13] This feature is not available for school-level administration of SCLS.

# 3. Administration Guide: Recommended Practices

This section of the guide is intended for SCLS Survey Administrators. The recommended practices for the SCLS administration presented here provide education agencies with an overview of best practices they should know about prior to launching an SCLS administration. Guidance for specific SCLS survey populations (students, instructional staff, noninstructional staff [including principals], and parents/guardians) is indicated where appropriate.

Specifically, the following topics are addressed:

- Planning how to survey respondent group (students, parents, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals);
- Setting the dates of the administration window;
- Conducting a test run of the SCLS before taking it live;
- Monitoring the participation rates and encouraging respondents who have not taken the survey; and
- Overseeing the data when the administration window closes.

## 3.1 Preparing for the Survey Administration

This subsection contains recommended practices for preparing for SCLS administrations, beginning with specific recommendations for each survey:

- **Student survey**
    a. The school's own technology capacity plays a large part in considering whether computer labs, media centers, or classrooms (with computer or tablet access) are the best options for administering the survey. If multiple options are available, consider which venue in your school affords the most privacy to each student.
    b. Regarding parental consent, please use the standard practice of the state/district/school to acquire the proper parental consent for any surveys or testing. The student survey questions are available in paper form in both English and Spanish for parents/guardians to review. It is recommended that parents/guardians be given the opportunity to review the student survey prior to the start of data collection. The student survey questions and parental consent forms can be emailed or printed and mailed along with report cards or other school documents. As a reference, two sample parental consent forms (passive and active)[14] are included in appendix G of this guide.
        - If your state law or school system policies do NOT require parents/guardians to "opt in" for surveys of their child, you can provide them the *passive* Parental Consent Form I found in appendix G.1.
        - If your state law or school system policies do require parents/guardians to "opt in" for surveys of their child, you will need to provide them the *active* Parental Consent Form II found in appendix G.2.[15]

[14] *Passive* consent means parents must notify the school if they want their child to not take (opt out of) the survey. *Active* consent means parents must notify the school if they want their child to take (opt into) the survey.

[15] Note that acquiring active parental consent requires more advance notice than passive consent, as schools need to note which parents have sent in forms and send reminders as necessary, in order to maximize the number of students who will take the survey.

- **Instructional and Noninstructional staff surveys**
    a. If your school does not provide instructional and noninstructional staff access to computers in their classrooms or offices, consider creating a sign-up sheet for the available computers through which staff can rotate.
    b. Some noninstructional staff, such as custodians, cafeteria workers, and bus drivers, may need to use school computers at designated times to complete their surveys. Schools should provide personnel to assist with this as necessary.
    c. Staff meetings provide an opportune time to both explain the surveys to staff and to have them complete the survey. Consider setting aside time and/or computers during the meeting for staff to use to complete the survey.
    d. If staff have designated times in the school day for planning, professional activities, or administrative tasks, consider allowing them to use that time to complete the survey.

- **Parent/Guardian surveys**
    a. In-person explanations may be more effective than letters and e-mails at increasing parent response rates. If a significant number of parents/guardians do not have e-mail addresses or computer access, then letters and in-person explanations become even more important. In such an instance, consider making the SCLS a cornerstone of orientation and parent-teacher conferences. Allocate more computers for SCLS participation during these meetings, provide personnel to assist, and have plenty of paper versions of the student survey questions on hand for those who request to review them.
        - Orientation is ideal for describing the surveys to parents/guardians.
        - Consider setting aside a room with computers for parents/guardians to use while they are waiting to start their conference or after they are finished with their conference.

- **The importance of standardized procedures:**
    a. Whether your aim is to compare your school climate results to national benchmark data or to other schools in your district or state, or to establish your own trend data, applying standardized procedures is critical to producing reliable data. Accurate measurement of the differences between two populations, or the change over time in a single population cannot be achieved if the measurement process itself is changed in any significant way.
    b. In the context of the SCLS, this means maintaining uniform procedures for administering the survey to respondents. For students, this includes the selection and training of Survey Proctors, using the proctor scripts (see appendix F), and applying strict protocols to ensure privacy. Training should familiarize Survey Proctors with the scripts, procedures, and use of the FAQs to answer students' questions (see 5. Frequently Asked Questions).

- **Documentation**
  a. It is critical to document decisions made throughout data collection (e.g., data collections windows, eligibility of respondents, methods used to engage respondents). Whatever procedural decisions are made, the same procedures may need to be followed in subsequent administrations in order to establish valid trend data.

- **The logistics of administering the SCLS:**
  a. The SCLS platform has been developed to be usable at the school-, district-, and state-levels. Depending on the size and complexity of the population and the education institution, the logistics of administration may require different divisions of labor.
  b. <u>For state-level administrations</u>, consider the following configuration of key staff:
     - **State Survey Administrator**: The person leading the SCLS administration at the *state* level. This person controls the generation and dissemination of username credentials for all respondents, monitors the real-time submission rates of each respondent group, and orchestrates the activities of the District and School Survey Coordinators.
     - **District Survey Coordinator(s)**: The people managing the SCLS administration at the *district* level. They act as liaisons between the State Survey Administrator and the School Survey Coordinators.
     - **School Survey Coordinators**: The people managing the SCLS administration at the *school* level. They answer respondents' questions about the SCLS, remind all respondents to answer their surveys, and reserve space during the administration window for students to take the surveys.
       i. Depending on the size and complexity of the district, either the District Survey Coordinators or the School Survey Coordinators are tasked with recruiting Survey Proctors and with organizing and conducting their training.
     - **Survey Proctors**: The people supervising the in-school student surveys. They prepare the rooms and computer access for students, read the Survey Proctor Script to the students, take note of absentees, and provide support to students having trouble accessing the survey.
  c. <u>For district-level administrations</u>, consider the following configuration of key staff:
     - **District Survey Administrator**: The person leading the SCLS administration at the *district* level. This person controls the generation and dissemination of username credentials for all respondents, monitors the real-time response rates of each respondent group, and orchestrates the activities of the School Survey Coordinators.
     - **School Survey Coordinator(s)**: The people managing the SCLS administration at the *school* level. These people answer respondents' questions about the SCLS, remind respondents to answer their surveys, reserve space for students to take surveys during the administration window, etc.
       i. Depending on the size and complexity of the district, either the District Survey Coordinators or the School Survey Coordinators are tasked with recruiting proctors and with organizing and conducting their training.
     - **Survey Proctors**: The people supervising the in-school student surveys. They prepare the rooms and computer access for students, read the Survey Proctor Script to the students, take note of absentees, and provide support to students having trouble accessing the survey.

d. For school-level administrations, consider the following configuration of key staff:
   - **School Survey Administrator**: The person leading the SCLS administration at the school. This person controls the generation and dissemination of username credentials for all respondents, and monitors the real-time response rates of each respondent group. This person also answers respondents' questions about the SCLS, reminds all respondents to answer their surveys, reserves space for students to take surveys, etc. This person also recruits Survey Proctors, and organizes and conducts the Survey Proctor Training.
   - **Survey Proctors**: The people supervising the in-school student surveys. They prepare the rooms and computer access for students, read the Proctor Script to the students, take note of absentees, and provide support to students having trouble accessing the survey.

- **Selecting Survey Proctors for the Student Survey**:

  a. SCLS student survey administrations must be supervised, necessitating Survey Proctors. The Survey Administrator or Survey Coordinator should select the Survey Proctors and furnish them with student usernames (which the Survey Administrator will randomly generate through the SCLS platform) and the proctor script. Depending on the size and complexity of your administration, this task can either be accomplished by a school- or district-level Survey Coordinator.

  b. Eligible Survey Proctors may include teachers, student-teachers, noninstructional staff, school counselors, school nurses, computer lab technicians, or outside consultants. If instructional staff are used, please consider having them proctor for classes of students that they do not teach. Despite overt privacy procedures, students may not be as open to providing honest responses in the vicinity of their regular class teacher.

- **Training Survey Proctors:**

  a. Training the Survey Proctors is critical to ensuring that the students finish the survey within a single class period. Provide the Survey Proctors with the Survey Proctor Script (see appendix F) and the SCLS FAQs, and hold an in-person or virtual meeting prior to the start of the administration window to review the materials and field any questions the proctors may have.

  b. All individuals involved in administering the SCLS, including the Survey Proctors, should sign the Confidentiality Pledge (see appendix E). This reinforces the commitment to confidentiality and the signed form can be shown to parents/guardians to address privacy concerns.

- **Determining Respondent Eligibility/Ineligibility**:

  a. It is recommended that data be collected from all eligible respondents at a school to obtain a full picture of the school climate. This is called a universe or census data collection.

  b. Even with a Census or universe data collection, decisions should be made by the education agency regarding respondent eligibility. For example, consider:
     - Students who are new to the school. Students may need time to experience the school building before accurately answering questions about building-level conditions. Consider whether students must be enrolled in the school for a certain number of days prior to being eligible for the survey.
     - Students who are eligible for alternative assessment. The SCLS survey is not specifically designed to accommodate students with severe cognitive disabilities who typically require alternative assessments. Consider whether these students should be ineligible.

    - For the instructional staff and noninstructional staff surveys, consider which staff will be invited (full time and part time only? Occasional staff and substitute teachers included? What about noninstructional staff who interact with students in non-academic ways, such as janitors, bus drivers, and cafeteria staff?).

- **Information on Response Rates**:
  a. Response rate is the percentage of each respondent group that is invited to complete a survey that responds to the survey. Achieving high response rates is very important for obtaining valid and unbiased data. Education agencies should make a decision regarding the acceptable minimal response rate for a respondent group's data to be included when reporting results.

- **Overcoming the Challenges Around Communicating with Parents/Guardians:**
  a. Parents'/guardians' opinions about a school's climate are very important. However, obtaining interest and support from parents/guardians can be challenging. Parents/guardians may not have the technology to access the survey or have enough technical skills to answer the online survey. Parents/guardians may also feel they are too busy to respond to the survey.
  b. Given these challenges, we recommend reaching out to parents/guardians early, informing them about the goal of the survey and providing opportunities to ask questions. Schools may need to employ creative strategies to get parents/guardians interested in the survey. It is important to note that the parent survey is short and it can be answered on desktops and laptops as well as any mobile device such as tablets or smart phones. Those parents/guardians who are not familiar with computers can be invited to use school computers, with assistance provided by school personnel.

## 3.2 Setting Dates for the Survey Administration Window

Setting the dates of the administration involves early planning. The dates of the data collection window can affect participation rates, the perceptions of certain school climate factors, and future administrations. Consider the following guidelines:

- Comparing Data and Establishing Trend Data
  a. The national benchmark survey will be conducted in spring, 2016. If you are interested in comparing your survey results to those of the nation, you should set your data collection window to the same approximate time frame. If your state or district is interested in comparing school scores across the state or district, your state or district should administer the surveys to all participating schools during the same time frame.
  b. If you intend to use the SCLS to establish trend data across time, repeated administrations should be conducted cyclically, during the same 2-week to 1-month window, annually or biannually. This prevents conflation of cyclical factors with structural factors.
  c. Spring administrations are recommended. This gives respondents a chance to reflect and report on their perceptions of the school over the course of the school year when answering questions.
  d. School Year Schedule
    - The SCLS is best administered in the Spring, but no later than April, if possible. Later administrations face the challenge of competing for time with standardized tests, increasingly busy school schedules, and higher absentee rates (an especially acute problem when surveying 12th grade students).

e. Other Considerations
   - ***Holidays***. It is best to avoid conducting the SCLS after long school breaks, especially after the winter holiday and spring break. In general, surveys should not be conducted on the day immediately before or after a holiday because absentee rates may spike.
   - ***Days of the Week.*** If possible, avoid administering the student surveys on Mondays and Fridays as they often have unusually low attendance rates. This is particularly prevalent on Fridays before a Monday holiday.
   - ***Adjusting the Dates of the Data Collection Window.*** If the submission rates[16] are low, the Survey Administrator may want to consider extending the data collection window period in the SCLS platform (see 2.2.4 Data Collection). This is a particularly attractive feature when encountering a situation where there are a high number of respondents who have logged in to the survey but have not finished it yet (i.e., have not submitted it). Their status can be seen as "logged-in, not submitted" (see 2.2.7.1 Survey Status Reports). This group of people has shown interest by logging in, and may be convinced to finish the survey if reminded and given a little more time. For students, this may mean scheduling a make-up time to finish up surveys (this is especially helpful for slow readers).

## 3.3 Test Runs Prior to Administration of Student Surveys

Survey Administrators should conduct a test run of the platform and logistics chain to make sure that the platform has been installed properly and the system works. It is also useful for becoming familiar with the survey administration process. The test run should include the following steps:

1. Set the Data Collection start and end date.
2. Generate at least one random username for each respondent group.
3. Use the usernames to log in and answer the first few questions.
4. Use the "REPORTS" boxed section of the dashboard to make sure it is showing your username as "Partial."
5. Complete the rest of a survey.
6. Check the *Survey Status Reports/Case Disposition* section to make sure it is showing your username as "Completed."
7. After the data collection end date, check the *Survey Status Reports* section to make sure it reflects question-level data (i.e., item frequencies).

Survey Administrators, Survey Coordinators, and Survey Proctors should do a test run to access and log into the survey prior to the start of the data collection. For efficiency, consider folding this test run into the training of Survey Coordinators and/or Survey Proctors.

[16] The submission rate is the number of surveys that have been completed (i.e., submitted to the SCLS system) over the number of usernames randomly generated by the system.

At least three school days before the survey window starts, the Survey Administrator should distribute the following materials to each Survey Proctor (usually done through the school-level Survey Coordinators):

- Classroom number(s) and period(s) of their administrations;
- Class roster (to keep track of absentees);
- Student usernames randomly generated by the SCLS platform;
- Proctor Instructions; and
- Survey Proctor Script (see appendix F).

## 3.4 During the Survey Administration Window

Guidelines for continued communication during administration:

- The SCLS platform reports the number of the usernames generated for each data collection, and the number used to log in as well as the submission rate (see 2.2.7.1 Survey Status Reports). Survey Administrators can then use the submission rates to motivate non-respondents to participate. For example, the submission rates can be included in the reminders sent to participants. We recommend displaying the numbers in visual formats (e.g., pie graphs) for added effect. If you are conducting the survey in multiple schools, you can imbue a competitive aspect by publicizing the submission rates of each school. The same concept can be applied to a whole district or state, depending on the size of your administration.

Monitoring submission rates:

- Achieving a high response rate is important in order to avoid non-response bias. Non-response bias occurs when the views expressed by those who respond do not reflect the views of the entire population. For example, the most dedicated staff members may not take out time from helping students to take the survey. Such staff members are likely to have very strong staff-student relationships, but if they do not complete the survey, the overall results may be skewed towards weaker relationships.
- Please note that response rates and submission rates are often different from one another for a variety of reasons. For example, a Survey Administrator may generate extra usernames, resulting in a higher denominator for the submission rate calculation. Certain cases are also treated differently in the calculation of response rates and submission rates. For example, respondents who log into the survey but choose the opt out feature will be considered complete for the purposes of submission rates but are not considered to be respondents. The SCLS platform cannot produce response rates; therefore, submission rates should be used as a proxy for response rates.

Increasing response rates:

- Reminder e-mails and/or letters can be sent to respondent groups to increase participation.
- Who sends the reminders to which respondent groups is best determined by relationship immediacy. As such, instructional staff are the best contact points for reaching out to parents/guardians, principals are best suited to influencing instructional and noninstructional staff, and district leaders are best suited to achieving full participation from principals.

Lackluster response rates are most acute in parent surveys of school climate. Consider the following strategies to optimize parents'/guardians' response rates:

- Emphasize the value/actionability of the data gathered and ensure confidentiality. The randomly generated usernames are not connected to any particular individual. The parents'/guardians' input is valuable because they are the only adult stakeholders in the school system who are not directly part of that school system.

- Teacher-parent conferences provide an opportune venue for parents/guardians to complete the survey. The instructional staff give feedback on the child's progress to the parents/guardians, and the parents/guardians can then provide feedback to the school about its climate. We recommend designating a room with computers or tablets for parents/guardians to fill out the survey while they are waiting for their turn with the teacher or when they are finished with their conference. Provide personnel to assist those parents/guardians who are not familiar with computers or tablets.
    a. Be careful about soliciting parent input from only certain groups of parents/guardians (e.g., PTA). Such programs draw a narrower band of parents/guardians who are likely to be far more involved in their child's school than the average parent, leading to an over-representation of a subset of the population.

Nonresponse Bias:

- When the response rate is below 80 percent, a nonresponse bias analysis is recommended to determine whether or not the respondents to your study are representative of the population in your school, district, or state and to assess the potential magnitude of nonresponse bias. The analysis will help evaluate whether the data or reports based on the data are biased by the missing respondents.
- SCLS administrators can use the frequency distributions of the demographic variables (grade [student only], race/ethnicity, and sex) that are included in the reports and compare them to another data source that has the frequencies of these demographic variables for the total population. The non-response bias worksheet with embedded formulas is included in the SCLS package and can be used to carry out basic analysis. A worksheet for student survey will look like this:

| Student Characteristic | Percent of respondents | Percent of students | Estimated bias | Relative bias |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grade | | | | |
| 5th Grade | 12.5 | 12.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| 6th Grade | 11.9 | 12.0 | -0.1 | 0.0 |
| 7th Grade | 12.5 | 12.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| 8th Grade | 13.8 | 12.0 | 1.8 | 0.1 |
| 9th Grade | 12.5 | 12.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| 10th Grade | 11.3 | 12.0 | -0.7 | -0.1 |
| 11th Grade | 11.9 | 12.0 | -0.1 | 0.0 |
| 12th Grade | 12.5 | 12.0 | 0.5 | 0.0 |
| Ungraded | 1.3 | 4.0 | -2.7 | -2.1 |
| | | | | |
| Gender | 50.0 | 45.0 | 5.0 | 0.1 |
| Male | 50.0 | 55.0 | -5.0 | -0.1 |
| Female | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | | |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 10.0 | 2.0 | 8.0 | 0.8 |
| Asian | 5.0 | 7.0 | -2.0 | -0.4 |
| Black/African-American | 15.0 | 15.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander | 5.0 | 5.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Hispanic | 20.0 | 20.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Two or more races | 5.0 | 1.0 | 4.0 | 0.8 |
| White | 40.0 | 50.0 | -10.0 | -0.3 |

- The "Percent of respondents" column indicates the characteristics of the respondents to the survey. The "Percent of students" is extant information from the administrative data of the school or school system. The SCLS administrator should enter the demographic characteristics included at the end of item frequency report into the second column, labeled "Percent of respondents" and comparable data from the administrator's records should be entered into the third column, labeled "Percent of students" in the example (this should also be used for the other categories of respondents). The "estimated bias" column indicates, in percentage point terms, differences between respondent and overall student population differences. The "relative bias column" indicates how large the bias is relative to the estimates from the "percent of respondents" column.
- In those cases in which the administrator has elected to preserve the identity of the students for the purpose of linking to data from their record systems, student survey responses can also be linked to external data sources to conduct more detailed bias analysis using additional student data to measure bias within the responding population as compared to the full population. Additionally, if the data are being collected at the district or state level, the administrator can add additional school and district data for additional analyses. If these additional data are used, the administrator would add the additional variables to the first column labeled [Student] characteristic, and drag the formulas in the fourth and fifth columns to the row corresponding to the end of the list of characteristics.
- The bias is computed by subtracting each value in the "Percent of [students]" column from the comparable value in the "Percent of respondents" column. The relative bias is the bias estimate for each row divided by "Percent of respondents". For any group of respondents, if the estimated bias is larger than 1 percentage point (greater than 1.0 or less then -1.0), the survey data should be used with caution. Administrators should also be cautious if the relative bias is larger than 0.3 or less than -0.3. We can provide assistance to schools and districts in the pilot with their nonresponse bias analysis if needed.

Providing support to parents/guardians, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff:

- The SCLS announcements sent to all non-student respondents should include the FAQs provided in section 5. Frequently Asked Questions. Survey Coordinators and Survey Proctors should also have copies of the FAQs.
- If the FAQs do not provide the answer, respondents' queries can be routed to Survey Administrators or appropriate personnel:
    a. Questions and/or comments about survey questions
        - Contact [Help Desk, AIR, schoolclimate@air.org, 1-844-849-5252]
    b. Questions about logging-in (e.g., username not working, resetting usernames, using PIN, etc…), survey functionality, and user-interface (e.g., navigation, time-outs, Spanish/English toggle feature, etc…)
        - Contact [Survey Administrator, affiliation, e-mail, telephone]

## 3.5 After the Data Collection Window Closes

***Results***

The SCLS platform automatically produces a report of the results when the data collection window closes.[17] However, if you wish to further analyze the data, you may export the raw data into a CSV file, accessible via Excel and many programming applications, to further analyze the data as needed.

[17] For the pilot study, only the survey submission reports and item frequency reports are immediately available in the system. Scale scores will be provided to participating schools/districts only after the pilot data have been analyzed, in Fall 2015.

***Storage of the Data***

The education agency that conducts the SCLS is responsible for storing the data in a secure manner. Any materials that directly or indirectly identify respondents should be kept in a locked compartment in a locked room when not in use. For the SCLS Pilot administration, Survey Administrators will be asked to send password-protected data to AIR. The data will be kept on a secure server at AIR.

***Deletion or Preservation of the Data***

The SCLS platform can be used for multiple cycles without deleting prior data collections. The platform's tools are streamlined to allow sorting according to each administration. Keeping the data makes multi-administration comparison easier by establishing trend lines. However, the data are ultimately the responsibility of the education agency that collected them, and deleting or preserving them is at the discretion of that agency.

## 4. Instructions for in-School Administration of the Student Survey

**Survey Administrators, Coordinators, and Proctors should read this section in advance of the first day of the administration window.** Students should take the SCLS survey in the controlled environment of a school, not at home or in any other uncontrolled environment. This section guides Survey Administrators, building-level School Survey Coordinators, and Survey Proctors in effectively and consistently administering the SCLS. Instructions include:

- *Scheduling resources* (e.g., time in computer labs; survey support staff)
    a. The student survey portion of the SCLS has been designed to be completed in a single, 50- to 60-minute class period. This includes the time need for the Survey Proctor to read the script to students (see appendix F) and the students to log in and complete the survey. The survey administration procedures are designed so that Survey Administrators and building-level School Survey Coordinators can follow typical computer lab/media center reservation procedures at their respective schools.
- *Accommodations for students*
    a. The SCLS surveys are 508 compliant[18] and schools should provide the same accommodations for students as are usually provided for student testing. These accommodations include, but are not limited to, magnifying devices, bilingual dictionaries, extended time, and small group administration.
    b. The SCLS student survey is provided in both English and Spanish. Other language accommodations such as small group administrations with translators should be offered to students who are not fluent in either English or Spanish.
- *Make-up dates for absent students and those needing additional time*
    a. For student surveys, it is important to fold make-up dates into the data collection window, especially for large school-, district-, and state-level administrations. Absentees are inevitable, and a large enough number of them could introduce a non-response bias; for example, students who are frequently absent may not be as engaged in the school as others. Have at least one make-up day set aside for absent students as well as those who are not able to complete the survey in one class session. If possible, consider setting aside multiple make-up dates for larger administrations.
- *Setting the ground rules of the administration*
    a. Students should be instructed to take a seat at a computer terminal of their choice and should be provided with a username for logging into the survey.
    b. Students should be reminded to stay quiet throughout the survey to avoid distracting fellow classmates. If they have a problem logging into the survey, they should raise their hands. If they have a question about the meaning of language used in the survey, they should do their best to figure out the intent—in order to ensure privacy and standardized administration, proctors cannot provide individualized help.
    c. When the above instructions have been given, the proctor should begin reading the Proctor Script (see appendix F).
- *Assigning log-in credentials and ensuring all students can log into the survey platform*
    a. It should be evident to the students if the proctor can connect a username to a student or not. If the linkage to other student data is not planned, we recommend placing a username at each computer before the students arrive, and then allowing them to choose where they sit. If you prefer assigned seating, we recommend having students pick up a username from a stack as they walk into the room. If the

[18] Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in 1998, requires that all federal information that is accessible electronically must be accessible for those with disabilities.

linkage to other student data is planned, usernames will need to be handed out after students' names are verified. Use the standard administration procedures and conduct the surveys in settings that ensure students' privacy.

b. The proctor should be free to move around the room until every student has successfully logged in and reached the welcome page. If a student has trouble, ask him/her to try the username again, paying careful attention to special characters and capitalization. If the problem persists, provide the student with a new username, make note of the problematic username and pass it on to the Survey Administrator. Once a student logs in, the system will generate a PIN for re-entry to their survey. The PIN cannot be recovered by the Survey Administrator. Please instruct students to write down their PINs in case they need to re-enter the survey.

- *Accessing the survey in Spanish*
  a. The SCLS platform has a bilingual toggle feature for student (and parent) surveys. Students can click on the "English/Español" links above each question to select their preferred language.
- *Answering students' questions*
  a. The proctor should help students log in. Once students are logged in, the proctor should not try to come up with answers to any questions about the wording of any questions in the survey in order to maintain privacy and standardized protocols. In case of student confusion, please tell students to try their best to respond based on their best guesses. Proctors should note questions that students have about specific the items and pass the information on to NCES through the Survey Coordinators and Administrators.
- *Closing out when the survey period ends*
  a. It is best not to allow students to leave the class or surf the web upon finishing the survey as this may incentivize them to rush through it too quickly. Either ask them to sit quietly or give them an activity that will not disturb others (e.g., a reading assignment).

# 5. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The FAQs provide a list of potential general questions and answers about the SCLS. The list of FAQs are developed based on the experience of the SCLS team in administering school-based surveys via an online platform, and will be updated after the pilot study and the national benchmarking study.

## 5.1 Survey Logistics and Administration

Q: *What questions do the surveys ask?*

A: The surveys cover a wide range of topics related to school climate, including questions concerning school engagement, school safety, and school environment. The survey does not ask about the personal experiences of individuals, but rather, asks about their perceptions of safety, student engagement, and environment at the school.

Q: *How long will it take to complete the surveys?*

A: The length of time ranges per survey. The final versions of the student, instructional, and noninstructional staff surveys take about 30 minutes to complete and the parent/guardian survey takes about 15 minutes.[19]

Q: *Does the SCLS include a survey for staff, students and parents?*

A: Yes, SCLS includes four surveys, one for each respondent group—students in grades 5–12, and parents/guardians, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals) in their schools.

Q: *Who should respond to the surveys?*

A: The surveys were designed with all relevant stakeholders in mind. As a result, the surveys are intended for all school staff, along with all students and parents/guardians of students enrolled at the school.

Q: *Can we administer just one or some of the four surveys?*

A: You can. However, SCLS is designed to be a suite of surveys to establish a baseline of school climate across all relevant stakeholders. We recommend the administration of the surveys to all respondent groups in order to obtain the most comprehensive picture of the school's climate.

Q: *When is the best time to administer the surveys?*

A: While local needs and context may vary, it is recommended that the surveys be administered sometime during the spring. All surveys should be administered during the same time period across schools and respondent groups.

Q: *How frequently can the surveys be administered?*

A: There is no limitation to the frequency of survey administration in a given school year (i.e., the SCLS can be administered multiple times during the school year). However, to ensure consistency of data, the surveys should be administered during the same cyclical time frame each year in order to make comparisons across time points across years.

[19] The pilot study versions of the questionnaires are longer. Items that do not perform well in the pilot study will be removed from the released SCLS platform. In the pilot study, it will take around one class period (50-60 minutes) to administer and complete the student, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff surveys. The parent/guardian survey takes around half an hour to complete.

Q: *Can the Survey Administrator be the same person as the Survey Coordinator?*
A: Yes, if there are only a couple of schools in the district or state or if the Survey Administrator can manage all survey activities (e.g., collecting contact information for respondents, reserving computer labs for student surveys) at each participating school. Generally speaking, if a district is hosting a survey, there should be one Survey Administrator at district level and one Survey Coordinator/contact person in each school building.

Q: *Are there any other recommended standards related to how the surveys are administered?*
A: Recommended best practices can be found in the SCLS users' guide, but education agencies can develop their own procedures/standards or follow any procedures/standards that are used for any kind of testing or surveys.

Q: *How does the platform enable parents to complete the survey? For example, is it something they can complete from home?*
A: Parents will need to know the link to the survey and a username randomly generated by the platform. If parents/guardians have email addresses, the platform can disseminate usernames to the addresses. Parents (or any respondent) can take the survey from any computer or mobile device (including smartphones).

Q: *Are the paper versions of the questionnaires available to look at?*
A: The questionnaire items are available to be reviewed on paper, but surveys will need to be answered online so that the SCLS platform can process and report the survey results.

Q: *What are the accommodations for students with disabilities or English Language Learners (ELL)?*
A: The SCLS platform is 508 compliant[20] and is programmed so that the student and parent/guardian surveys can be completed in either English or Spanish. Schools should consider providing the same special accommodations to students as those provided for other assessments (e.g., translation services, extended time, and magnification devices). If a student does not finish, he or she can come back during a makeup date that should be set up for absent students as well as those who do not finish. Each school or district is free to schedule this session however they feel is most efficient for schools, but it needs to be completed within the administration window.

Q: *Do we need to survey "all" students or can we use scientific sampling?*
A: We recommend universe data collection. If you would like to draw a sample for data collection, please make sure the sample is a representative portion of the population and a sampling statistician is consulted.

Q: *What is considered an acceptable response rate for the parent survey?*
A: Parents are a difficult group to get to respond to surveys. If the response rate is below 80 percent, a nonresponse bias analysis is recommended to determine whether or not the respondents to your study are representative of the population in your school, district, or state and to assess the potential magnitude of nonresponse bias. Please consider using creative ways to contact and engage parents in the survey.

Q: *What is the estimated time a district or school would receive scale score reports for the pilot study?*
A: Fall 2015.

[20] Section 508 Amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 includes a set of standards by which electronic forms of governmental publications are made more easily accessible to people with disabilities.

## 5.2 Technical Platform Capabilities

Q: *Will schools or state agencies need to dedicate an entire server to use the platform (or are the technical requirements less burdensome)?*

A: An entire server will not be necessary to utilize the full functionality of the platform. Below are the minimum technical requirements to install and run the platform:

Windows (XP or later), Linux, or Mac OS X
At least 512MB of RAM, 1GB recommended
At least 4GB of free hard disk space, depending on the number of total respondents
A static IP and URL to which to bind the website
A high speed internet connection

Q: *If there is a problem setting up the survey platform in the pilot study, whom can I contact?*

A: There is an SCLS Help Desk that will be available should you have any problems setting up the survey platform. You may contact the SCLS Help Desk at 1-844-849-5252, or send an email to SchoolClimate@air.org. Please include specific questions in your message—this allows us to connect you with the personnel best equipped to help you.

Q: *Can I modify/remove questions I don't want?*

A: Modifying or removing survey questions will potentially affect the psychometric properties of the SCLS scales, thereby posing significant risks to the comparability of results across education agencies and to national benchmarks. Specifically, the questions to be offered in the SCLS are intended to produce psychometrically validated scales, and it is crucial for the statistical validity of those scales that all questions remain in the survey. As a result, schools and districts will not be able to alter the questions that are currently part of SCLS.

Q: *Can I add additional questions?*

A: In the released version, after the pilot study, the platform will allow education agencies to add questions in the same multiple-choice format to the end of the surveys. The platform will not provide any reporting on these additional questions. However, education agencies can export the data files and perform additional analysis and reporting outside of the system.

Q: *What kind of information does the survey platform provide during live administrations?*

A: The SCLS platform provides access to real-time submission rates[21] at the school level. These submission rates are determined based on the number of respondents in each population who have logged into the survey and the education agencies' reports of the number of expected respondents in each population (i.e., the number of respondent usernames generated). The platform also allows administrators to identify the usernames that have not been used, those that have been started but not completed (submitted), and those that have been completed (submitted).

Q: *Can surveys results be linked to outside data systems?*

A: The SCLS platform can't be linked to any other data system. However, student data, after being exported from the platform, can potentially be linked to external data sources (such as student achievement, graduation rates, absenteeism, etc.) if the linking between student names and their usernames is retained during the username assignment stage outside of the SCLS platform.

[21] Submission rates are determined based on the number of respondents in each population who have logged into the survey and the education agencies' reports of the number of expected respondents in each population (i.e., the number of respondent usernames generated).

Q: *If a school or school district administers a school climate survey, is log-in information created from which students, parents/guardians, and staff use to complete the survey?*
A: After the SCLS platform is installed and data collection is set up, a Survey Administrator can generate the number of usernames he or she decides on. The usernames can then be exported to either disseminate them manually, or pair them up with email addresses and let the platform disseminate them via email. We have detailed instructions about how to do this in the user's guide accompanying the platform.

Q: *If paper surveys are administered to students, can the district enter the results into the program?*
A: Yes, but it is not recommended due to the increased likelihood of data entry error. In order to do this, the SCLS platform will still need to be installed on the district server. We also encourage that an appropriate protocol be developed to ensure the data entry quality.

Q: *Is there a cutoff score for positive or negative school engagement?*
A: There is no cutoff score, but in the final tool released after 2016, a school's data will be compared to national benchmark data.

## 5.3 Privacy and Data Security

Q: *Is the survey anonymous?*
A: The system will generate a random username. If you disseminate the usernames students, parents, and staff randomly and do not keep track of which respondent receives which username, then the survey will be anonymous because you will not have information on who is associated with a randomly generated username. Note that in the parent and staff surveys, usernames are removed from the data file so that there is no possibility to trace responses back to an individual respondent. If the education agency plans to link student responses to existing data systems, they will need to keep track of which usernames were assigned to which students outside of the SCLS platform. In this case the survey is not anonymous. All SCLS data are confidential and anyone who has access to the SCLS data should sign confidentiality pledges.

Q: *How does SCLS address parental consent?*
A: The SCLS user's guide includes sample parental consent forms (active or passive). Please refer to relevant laws in your state and locality in deciding which form to use.

Q: *Who will be responsible for the data collected? Where are the data stored?*
A: Depending on which education agency is hosting the survey administration, either the state, local school district, or individual school will be responsible for the data collected. These data will be stored on the respective state, district, or school server.

Q: *How will the data collected be used by American Institutes for Research (AIR) or the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)? Will we need to send back any information, and if so, how?*
A: AIR/NCES will need the pilot data to evaluate survey items and create scales for domains and topic areas. Survey Administrators will need to export the survey results from the SCLS platform and email the password-protected file back to SchoolClimate@air.org. After the final version of the SCLS is released in Fall 2015, no data need be sent back to AIR/NCES. Also, schools in the national sample will need to send their data back to AIR/NCES so we can analyze them to create national benchmarks.

Q: *Do we need to obtain any additional approval for administrating the survey?*

A: It is the responsibility of the education agency that is administrating the SCLS to check if additional approval is required by the state or locality (e.g., from an Institutional Review Board [IRB]).

# 6. Understanding the SCLS Scales

**School climate scale scores cannot be generated by the pilot version of the SCLS platform.** However, this section is included to provide education agencies with some basic information on the SCLS scales as they are currently planned. The SCLS surveys measure three domains—Engagement, Safety, and Environment—and 13 sub-domain topical areas (see figure 1 in appendix A). For the student, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff surveys, the aim is to measure most of the topical areas with scales; these topical area scale scores may be consolidated into the domain scores (Engagement, Safety, and Environment).

For each of the topical areas that will be measured with a scale, the pilot versions of the questionnaires include 7–10 items for the student, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff surveys, with the aim of ending up with 5–6 items per topical area in the final SCLS instruments. Due to the small number of items in the emergency readiness and management topical area, we will not create a scale score for it. For the parent survey, the aim is to create only domain scales (not topical areas scores), given the limited survey items.

For each domain and topical area in the SCLS surveys, scale score reports in the SCLS system released after the pilot study will be available for each respondent group immediately after the close of data collection. Spring 2015 SCLS Pilot study sites will receive scale scores in Fall 2015, after the scaling analysis has been completed. For each respondent group, individual responses of all completed surveys will be aggregated by topical area and graphically presented at the education agency level. The final SCLS platform will allow administrators to disaggregate respondent scale scores by sub-groups within each category of respondent (e.g., race, gender).

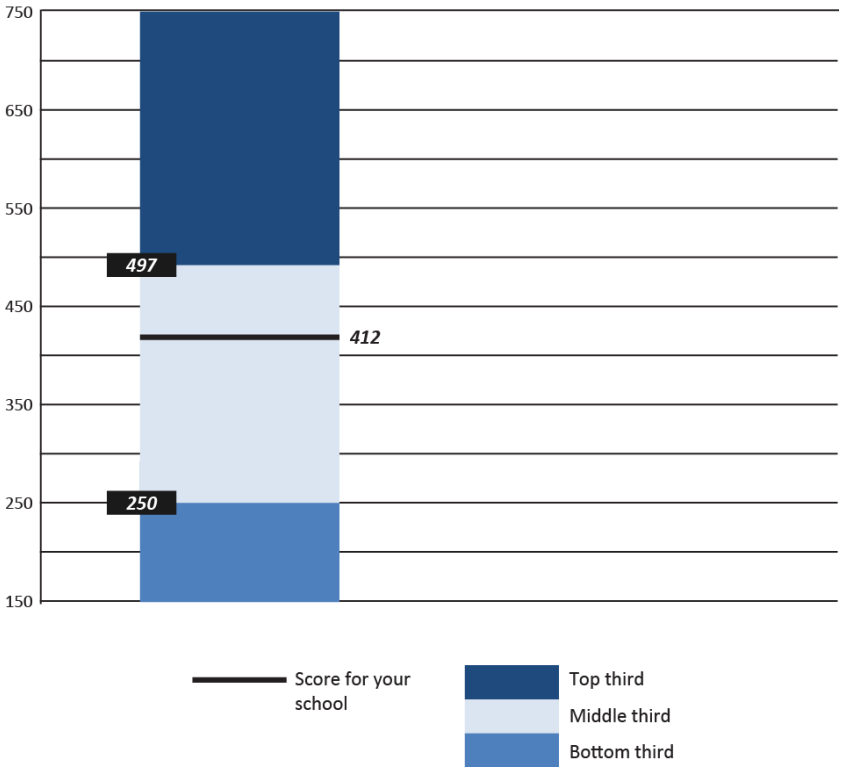
## 6.1 Presentation of Scale Scores

The SCLS platform will produce graphical displays of scale scores for each topical area (except for the parent surveys, which will be limited to domain scales). The use of scale scores to represent climate measurements can be thought of as similar to SAT scores, where the raw value is meaningful in its relation to a comparison point. The graphical presentation of these scores will show the average score across each respondent group and the comparison point (i.e., where the school average for each respondent group falls within the national low, middle, or top third of national data from the benchmarking study to be conducted in 2016). For example, in figure 3, a hypothetical school's score of 412 falls within the middle third (or tertile) of the distribution from the national benchmark data[22].

[22] The appropriate method for categorizing national benchmark tertiles will be determined after the data are collected in 2016.

**Figure 3. SCLS scale report: Bar display with national information, exact score for a school**

SCLS Scale Results Report
Data Collection: 03/30/16-05/25/16: Students
SCLS Scale Score: Emotional Safety
Report Date: May 22, 2016 18:06:41




Note: National benchmarking thirds (tertiles) are displayed to provide context for the school's score. The black line in the middle tertitle shows the school's exact score.

As shown in the example in figure 3, this school's Emotional Safety scale score is 412, which would fall in the middle third (tertile) of the national benchmark data.

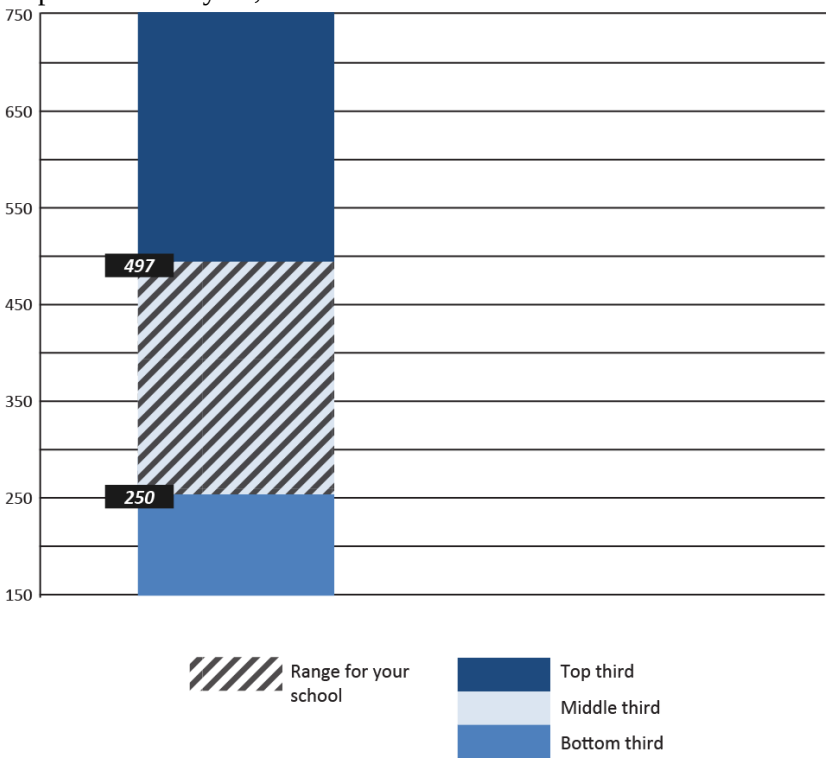
*Minimizing disclosure risk:*
In the event that there are very few respondents overall or in a subgroup (for example, if there is only one respondent of a certain race/ethnicity), reporting might result in indirect disclosure of a respondent's identity. To minimize the risk of disclosure to respondents while providing as much usable information as possible, scale scores for any respondent group or subgroup with *fewer than 3 respondents* will be suppressed.[23]

For groups with *3 to 9 respondents*, scale scores will not be displayed. Instead, the national tertile (i.e., the top, middle, or bottom third of the national data) in which the education agency's score is associated will be displayed as the result, as shown in figure 4.

[23] In place of the graph, the following text will be displayed: "Score not shown due to disclosure risk."

**Figure 4. SCLS scale report: Bar display with national information, tertile-range score for a school**

SCLS Scale Results Report
Data Collection: 03/30/16-05/25/16: Students
SCLS Scale Score: Emotional Safety
Report Date: May 22, 2016 18:06:41



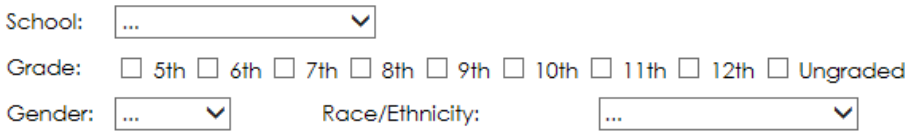

Note: National benchmarking thirds (tertiles) are displayed to provide context for the school's score. The shading of the middle tertile indicates that the school's score falls within the middle tertile.

As shown in the example in figure 4, this school's exact score for Emotional Safety is not shown because there are 3 to 9 respondents in this group. Therefore, only the national tertile in which the school's score falls is highlighted.

## 6.2 Subgroup Reporting

Users have the option of displaying scale score results by selected respondent subgroups. For the student surveys, the available subgroups are grade, gender, and race/ethnicity. For the parents, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff (including principals), the available subgroups are gender and race. Reporting levels can be selected and modified by users from within the reporting section of the Survey Administrator dashboard using drop-down lists. A separate drop-down list for each demographic variable (see figure 5 below) for subgroup reporting appears at the top of the reporting page (accessible via the Reports boxed section of the dashboard) and users may choose any combination of subgroups.

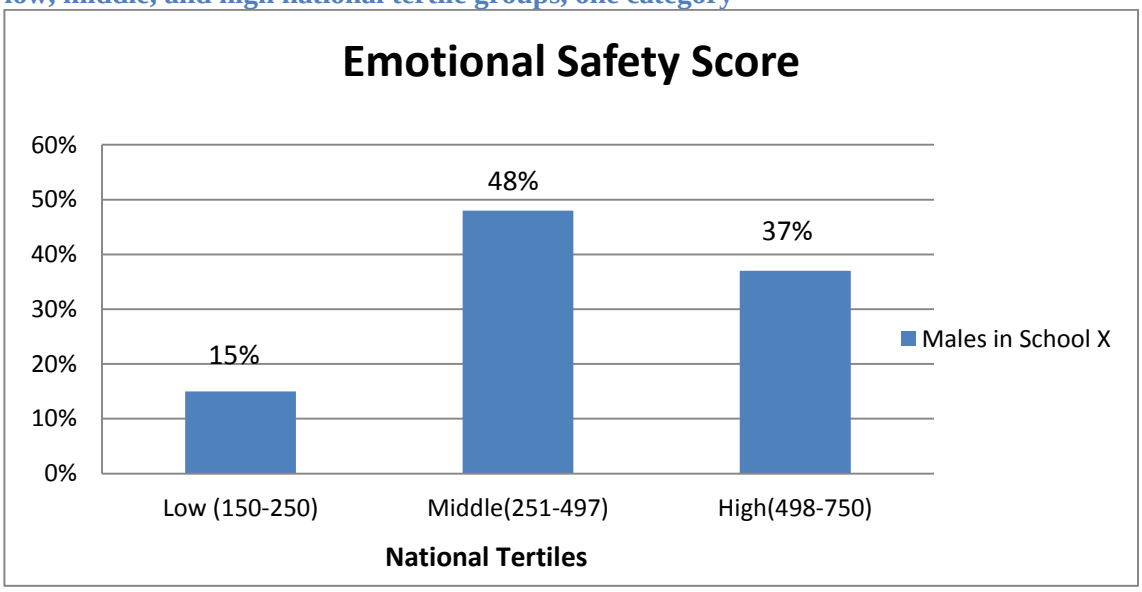
**Figure 5. SCLS drop-down lists for student sub-groups**



For example, a user who wants to produce a report for Asian female students would select the "Asian" option from the race/ethnicity drop down list and the "Female" option from the gender drop down list.

In order to present subgroup results in a meaningful and easily interpretable way, each category within the subgroup will be presented in a bar graph that shows the percentage of respondents in the category that fall into each tertile, based on the national distribution of the school climate scores.

**Figure 6. SCLS scale report: Bar display with percentage of respondent subgroup category in low, middle, and high national tertile groups, one category**

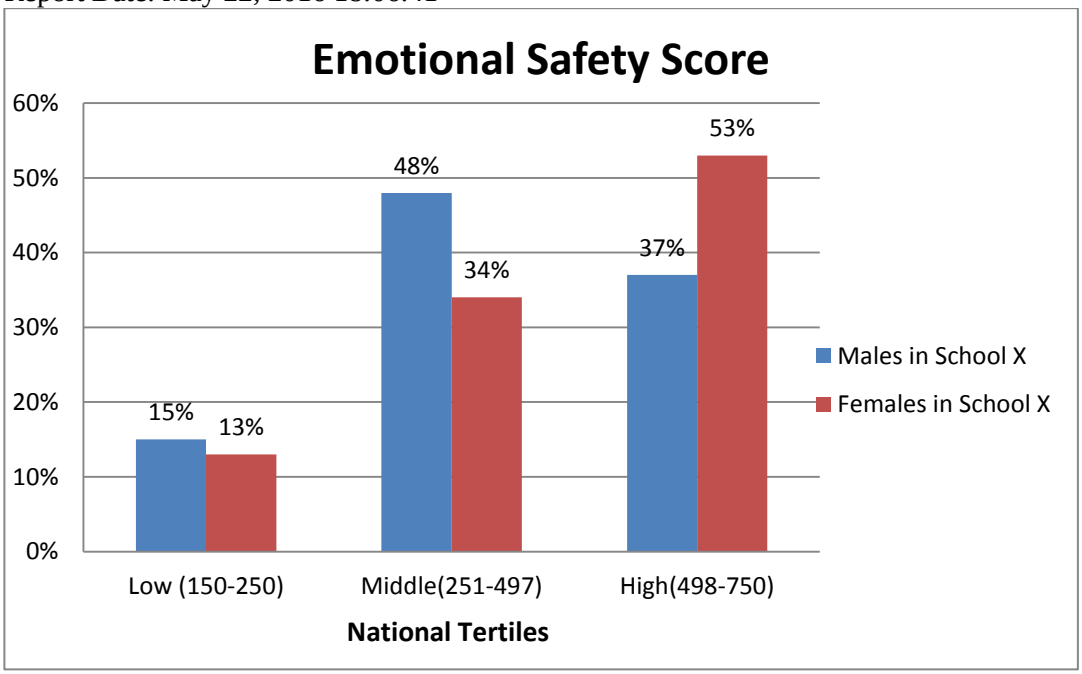



The example in figure 6 shows that for this school 15 percent of the male students fell in the Low Emotional Safety national tertile, 48 percent fell in the middle tertile, and 37 percent fell in the high tertile.

Users will also have the option of requesting subgroup reporting for multiple categories (as shown in figure 7), or for the same category/categories across schools (as shown in figure 8).

**Figure 7. SCLS scale report: Bar display with percentage of respondent subgroup categories in low, middle, and high national tertile groups, two categories**

SCLS Scale Results Report
Data Collection: 03/30/16-05/25/16: Students
SCLS Scale Score: Emotional Safety
Report Date: May 22, 2016 18:06:41




The example in figure 7 shows that, for school X, 15 percent of males and 13 percent of females fell in the Low Emotional Safety national tertile, 48 percent of males and 34 percent of females fell in the middle tertile, and 37 percent of males and 53 percent of females fell in the high tertile.

As with the overall scale scores, for any subgroup category with *fewer than 3 respondents*, results are not shown and suppression text appears below (or to the side of) the graph that reads "Results are not shown for <*category name*> due to disclosure risk."

In the event that a category within a subgroup has *between 3 and 9 respondents*, the percentage distribution is not shown, and additional suppression text appears below (or to the side of) the graph that presents information about that group's placement in comparison to the national average (above or below). For example, if there are between 3 and 9 Asian students in a graph showing race/ethnicity results, the additional suppression text will read "The average score for Asian students is above the national average. Detailed results are not shown due to disclosure risk."

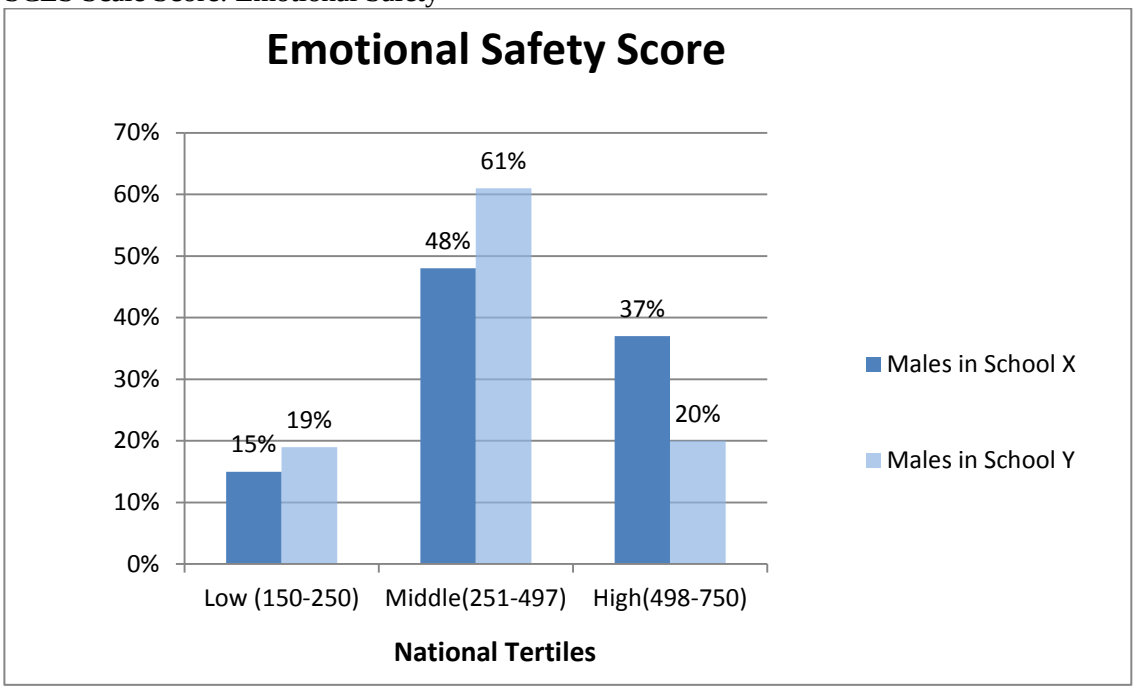
"District" and "school" are available as categories for reporting; all schools or districts that have associated data in the data table are presented as reporting options in the drop-down list. This reporting function enables districts to examine results at the school level and enables states to examine results at the district and school levels when they host the associated data in the SCLS platform. [24]

Multiple schools may also be chosen to produce comparison reports. Figure 8 provides an example of a comparison (subgroup) report for multiple schools.

[24] For a single school that is hosting the SCLS, no school or district options are presented. While the drop-down lists will be displayed, no choices will appear when opened.

**Figure 8. SCLS scale report: Bar display with percentage of respondent in low, middle, and high national tertile groups, two schools, one subgroup category**

SCLS Scale Results Report
Data Collection: 03/30/16-05/25/16: Students
SCLS Scale Score: Emotional Safety




The example in figure 8 shows that 15 percent of males in school X and 19 percent of males in school Y fell in the low Emotional Safety national tertile, 48 percent of males in school X and 61 percent of males in school Y fell in the middle tertile, and 37 percent of males in school X and 20 percent of males in school Y fell in the high tertile.

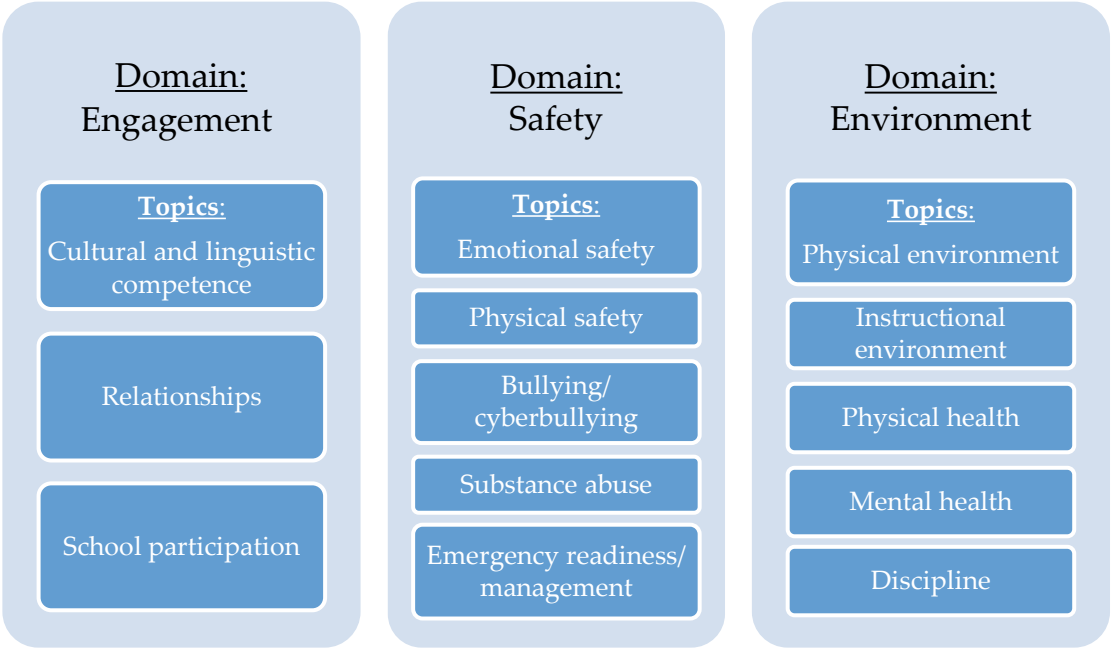
# Appendix A
## What SCLS Measure

Appendix A.1 – SCLS Research Base (content)
Appendix A.2 – SCLS Research Base (references)

## Appendix A.1
### SCLS Research Base (content)

Three domains – Engagement, Safety, and Environment, and their associated topical areas form the SCLS model of school climate (figure 1). Each of these domains and topical areas are measured in each of the four survey instruments. Some of these domains and topical areas are closely related to one another and include similar concepts—SCLS takes a panoramic approach in order to fully map the composition and influences of a school's climate. The remainder of this section provides a brief description of each domain and topical area and demonstrates its connection to the broader construct of school climate.

**Figure 1 SCLS model of school climate**




### Engagement

Engagement includes several components of "school connectedness," such as the amount of effort students expend in the work of learning, their sense of belonging, and their emotional involvement with the school (Marks 2000). The amount of effort students devote to schoolwork is critical to their academic success because grades encapsulate not just mastery of content, but also labor invested (e.g., homework assignments, class participation, and extra-credit assignments) (Willingham, Pollock, and Lewis 2002). The rapport built between students and the important people in their lives at school establishes an important foundation for students' perceptions of academia. As Blum (2005b, p. 4) observed, "people connect with people before they connect with institutions"—thus, positive relationships with instructors can contribute significantly to how much students value instruction. Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) also lend significant credence to the power of teacher-student relationships: they show that positive student beliefs about how much their teachers support their efforts to succeed in school are related to a reduction in the probability of students dropping out (Croninger and Lee 2001).

In the SCLS, engagement constitutes three topical areas: cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, and participation.

### *Cultural and Linguistic Competence*

Cultural and linguistic competence involves the degree to which students and families from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and connected to their school. When teachers seek to engage in unbiased instruction and to learn about their students, they can better respond to their students' needs (Gay 2010; Richards, Brown, and Forde 2004; Villegas and Lucas 2002). Ruus et al. (2007) found that the school value system and students' perceptions of teacher attitudes were significantly associated with students' optimistic acceptance of life, psychological and physical well-being, and academic success.

### *Relationships*

Positive relationships between students, adults, and peers are characterized by affirmative social interactions, leading to a nurturing environment of trust and support. When coupled with a consistent emphasis on academic performance, a strong sense of support and school community has been positively associated with improved academic achievement (Lee et al. 1990). The quality of relationships is also important to faculty job satisfaction. A qualitative study by Hargreaves (2000) found that teachers cite their relationships with their students as one of the most important aspects of their work. In addition, teachers say that their job satisfaction is also contingent on their relationships with parents (Shann 1998).

### *School Participation*

Participation encompasses all of students' efforts in the school context, ranging from class participation to extracurricular activities. Parents and staff also participate in school in various ways, such as through collective decision making and student instruction. Strong interconnectedness between staff, students, families, and school—as demonstrated by student participation in self-directed or cooperative activities—can contribute to a positive climate (Cohen 2006; Cohen et al. 2009). Meaningful participation at school cultivates students' self-efficacy, decision-making and leadership skills, and personal talents and strengths (Jennings 2003; Holland and Andre 1987).

## Safety

Emotional and physical safety are fundamental characteristics of high-quality schools; in these schools, students feel a sense of belonging and are free to focus on learning (Dwyer and Osher 2000). Conversely, unsafe schools are associated with student and teacher victimization, increased truancy, lower levels of school attachment, decreased graduation rates, and increased disciplinary problems (Arseneault et al. 2006; Astor, Guerra, and Van Acker 2010; Bowen and Bowen 1999; Chen 2007; Henrich et al. 2004; Juvonen, Nishina, and Graham 2000; Neild, Furstenberg Jr., and Stoner-Eby 2002; Mayer and Furlong 2010). Current research also suggests that the perception of physical and emotional safety is directly related to academic achievement (Glew et al. 2005; Osher and Kendziora 2010; Ripski and Gregory 2009). The positive effects of safe schools influence school staff as well. Gregory and colleagues found that cumulative daily stress—forged by disrespectful behavior and obscene remarks from students—has serious implications on teachers' mental health (Gregory, Cornell, and Fan 2012); such abuse is directly linked to, and may be an important cause of, their premature retirement (Bauer et al. 2006).

In the SCLS, the safety domain includes five topics: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying, substance abuse, and emergency readiness and management.

### *Emotional Safety*

Emotional safety is the actual and perceived experience of feeling safe to express emotions and the confidence to take appropriate academic risks (Blum 2005a; Osher and Kendziora 2010). This aspect of safety contributes to a school's climate of mutual respect, trust, and equitable treatment among all members of the school community. Perceptions of respect, trust, and fairness are linked with school interconnectedness (i.e., a sense of community) (Blum 2005a; Resnick et al. 1997;

Chapman et al. 2011). The experience of interconnectedness bonds students to schools, enhances well-being, and reduces risky and antisocial behavior (Battistich and Hom 1997; Frey et al. 2009; Libbey, Ireland, and Resnick 2002; McGraw et al. 2008).

***Physical Safety***

Physical safety is predicated on protecting students from being victims of or witnesses to violence. There is a long history of research on the importance of safety to individuals' social and emotional growth, including Abraham Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, wherein safety and security are ranked second only to basic physiological needs. In order for students to focus on and learn about abstract concepts, they must be free from worry about their physical safety. In schools where students reported higher levels of safety, a higher percentage of students passed standardized tests, even after controlling for free or reduced-price lunch status (Milam, Furr-Holden, and Leaf 2010).

***Bullying***

Bullying constitutes unwanted and aggressive actions directed from one person to another; the definition of bullying also involves a real or perceived power imbalance between the two parties, with the actions being repeated or having the potential to be repeated (Olweus 1997). C*yber-bullying* is a recent permutation, wherein electronic devices—such as cell phones, computers, and tablets—are used to target the victim. Bullying undermines perceptions of safety (Sampson 2009, p. 1), and student-student and student-teacher relationships (Swearer et al. 2010), making bullying prevention important for fostering a positive school climate (Cohen and Freiberg 2013; Thapa et al. 2013).

***Substance Abuse***

Substance abuse is a harmful pattern of using substances such as alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs, or prescription drugs. This behavior carries the risk of directly causing or aggravating physical and mental health issues, impeding the cognitive growth necessary for academic success, and fomenting substance dependence. According to the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (2001), "it is estimated that each year substance abuse costs schools at least $41 billion in truancy, special education, and disciplinary problems; disruption; teacher turnover; and property damage."[25]

***Emergency Readiness and Management***

Emergency readiness entails a school's preparedness to respond to a crisis or to an emergency such as a natural disaster, a violent incident, or an act of terrorism (National Child Traumatic Stress Network 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2013), emergency readiness includes prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery. Fostering a positive school climate can help prevent emergencies—because it can reduce the incidence of behaviors that contribute to crises (e.g., violence, bullying, harassment, substance abuse)—and help students respond to and recover from emergencies (U.S. Department of Education 2013). Additionally, Cornell and colleagues found that having a threat assessment program was associated with having a more positive and supportive school climate (Cornell et al. 2009).

### Environment

Positive school environments are characterized by appropriate and well-maintained facilities; well-managed classrooms with high levels of engagement, rigor, productivity, and inclusion; a range of available school-based health supports; clear, fair disciplinary policies; and explicit policies and procedures governing various school practices (Hamre and Pianta 2005; Welsh 2001). In addition to the resources and beneficial normative experiences provided to students through support staff, positive school environments also afford faculty varied and diverse opportunities to meet students'

[25] This is equivalent to $54.2 billion in 2014 dollars.

physical and mental health needs during the regular and extended school day (Hoagwood and Erwin 1997; Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee 2008; Stevens et al. 2008; Telford et al. 2012). A significant body of research suggests that different characteristics of the school environment (including elements of order, facilities, school rules, and discipline) influence student, adult, and school outcomes, both directly and indirectly (Buckley, Schneider, and Shang 2005; Gottfredson et al. 2005; LeBlanc et al. 2007; Lo et al. 2011; Payne 2008; Payne, Gottfredson, and Gottfredson 2003; Planty and DeVoe 2005; Roque and Paternoster 2011; Tillyer, Wilcox, and Gialopsos 2010; Wang and Dishion 2011).

In the SCLS, the environment domain consists of five topical areas: physical environment, instructional environment, physical health, mental health, and discipline.

***Physical Environment***

A school's physical environment encompasses the physical appearance and functioning of the building, including lighting (artificial and natural), thermal comfort, air quality and ventilation, acoustics and noise control, size and configuration of rooms, permanent versus portable rooms, safety measures (cameras, signage, metal detectors, etc.), location, and neighborhood surrounding it (Earthman 2004; National School Boards Association 1996; O'Sullivan 2006; Planty and DeVoe 2005; Schneider 2002). The condition of school facilities is highly correlated with teacher retention (Buckley, Schneider, and Shang 2005), as well as student health and academic achievement (Earthman and Lemasters 2011; Uline and Tschannen-Moran 2008). Studies show that children are more susceptible to environmental disease than are adults, increasing the importance of maintaining clean facilities (Jasper, Thanh-Tam, and Bartram 2012).

***Instructional Environment***

The instructional environment refers to the interconnectedness of the academic, social, and emotional aspects of learning as they relate to student achievement (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Ma et al. 2009), including such things as the quality of instruction, the quality and availability of materials and resources, the level of expectations for academic achievement, a shared sense of responsibility, student engagement and connection with the curriculum, positive classroom management strategies, and a focus on building strong teacher-student relationships (Ladson-Billings 1995; Cohen 2006). Extensive research by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and others has linked positive instructional environments to higher student test scores and graduation rates, higher reading scores, and lower dropout rates (Haahr et al. 2005; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 2009).

***Physical Health***

In the SCLS, physical health refers to the physical well-being of a school community and its members. Poor health obstructs children's education by driving excessive absenteeism, impeding completion of homework, and inhibiting teacher-student relationship growth (Needham, Crosnoe, and Muller 2004). Given the amount of time that students spend on school grounds, school health programs have the potential to be one of the most efficient means to prevent or reduce health risk behaviors and serious health problems among students (Centers for Disease Control 2011).

***Mental Health***

Mental health is more than just being psychologically well; it includes emotional and social well-being and is affected by many different factors (mentalhealth.gov). Mentally healthy students attend school ready to learn, are actively engaged in school activities, form supportive and caring relationships with adults and peers, apply problem-solving skills in a nonaggressive manner, and contribute to positive school culture (Freeman 2011; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine 2009).

***Discipline***

School discipline is defined as the rules and strategies applied in school to manage student behavior and the practices used to encourage self-discipline (Osher et al. 2010). Approaches to school discipline range from positive (e.g., improvements in school climate and the use of restorative justice practices) to punitive (e.g., suspension, expulsion, and corporal punishment) (Gottfredson et al. 2005; Mayer 1995; Skiba et al. 2011). Emerging research supports focusing on the former more than the latter, because punitive school discipline has not been shown to improve student behavior or academic achievement (Fabelo et al. 2011; Rebora 2013; Shah 2011). Schoolwide positive approaches have been associated with reduced disciplinary referrals and improvements in student academic achievement (Lassen, Steele, and Sailor 2006). Using positive approaches when discipline issues arise is hypothesized to reconnect students to their peers and teachers, improving the school experience for the community.

## Appendix A.2
### SCLS Research Base (references)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# Appendix B
## Features of the SCLS Platform

The SCLS will not be used to establish a national data collection and reporting system. Through the SCLS, school, district, and state education agencies independently administer the SCLS surveys, which means that there is no one organization (e.g., NCES) overseeing the data collection and ensuring that consistent procedures are implemented across schools. This lack of centralized oversight has the potential to threaten the validity of the results and comparability to national benchmarks. Therefore, the SCLS platform has been be programmed with a focus on building in key features that should be implemented in a uniform manner across all collections.

### B.1 Availability of Survey Link and Automated Dissemination of Username Credentials

The platform allows respondents to access their survey through a URL that can be accessed from any location with internet access and from all standard operating systems and browsers; the student surveys are more likely to be administered at schools.

To allow potential respondents to follow a link to the survey platform, the platform offers education agencies the option to disseminate log-in credentials by e-mail directly from the platform. The e-mails can be generated and sent directly from the platform, containing log-in information for each e-mail address and/or a link to the log-in page of the survey (the link will be the same for every respondent). Although email addresses are matched with randomly generated log-in credentials, these email addresses are deleted from the database after the data collections are closed and, therefore, will not be linked to respondents within the platform to protect respondent confidentiality.

### B.2 Informed Consent

The SCLS is designed as a voluntary survey and incorporates informed consent/assent procedures; therefore, the need to obtain consent was considered during the development of the platform. For adult populations, obtaining consent is generally a straightforward process by which respondents receive information regarding the survey (including the purpose of the study, the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained, and other elements of informed consent) and, upon indicating their agreement to participate, begin the survey. For student populations, however, obtaining informed consent can require additional steps. Local education agencies administrating the surveys should follow the appropriate procedures regarding parental consent that are used for any kind of surveys or testing in the school or school system. In the survey platform, students are presented with assent language that is appropriate for their age. This assent process is built into the surveys; similar to the adult populations, students are provided with information about the data collection and asked to participate. Additional consent/assent language can be added to the platform by the local education agencies based on their situations or practices.

### B.3 Spanish/English Bilingual Feature

The SCLS platform offers Spanish and English versions for the parent and student surveys. The SCLS platform allows these respondents to toggle between English and Spanish versions of questions at any point in the survey, giving them the option to answer different questions in different languages. The instructional staff and principal/noninstructional staff surveys are offered in English only.

### B.4 Survey Page Design

An important design issue of web-based surveys, with implications for question-level response rates, is the number of questions displayed on each survey page. If too many questions are included

on each survey page or if the questions are poorly formatted to accommodate different screen sizes and resolutions, it is more likely that a respondent will be required to scroll down or across the page to view the question; this in turn can increase the likelihood that a respondent will fail to answer these questions. The SCLS platform contains only one question per page to allow for responding to surveys on mobile devices such as smart phones or tablets.

### B.5 Real-Time Submission Rates

The SCLS platform provides access to real-time submission rates at the school level. These submission rates are determined based on the number of respondents in each population who have logged into the survey and the education agencies' reports of the number of expected respondents in each population (i.e., the number of respondent usernames generated).

The need to maintain respondent confidentiality and data security means that the platform cannot supply education agencies access to information about which respondents have completed the survey directly from the platform. The platform does, however, allow authorized users to export a list of usernames by completion status (e.g., a list of usernames not used). This information can be used by education agencies that have linked SCLS usernames to respondents in order to determine completion status at the respondent level and target non-response follow up as needed.

### B.6 Data Export

To maximize the utility of the SCLS data, the platform allows authorized users to download respondent-level data for all questions and scales. The initial log-in credentials are only included on student data. Those education agencies that have created a crosswalk between log-in credential and student identifiers can link individual-level student data to extant data (such as student administrative records) for further analyses. The data download process requires that the SCLS administrator read and acknowledge a statement that these data contain private, identifiable information, and must be handled in accordance with applicable confidentiality and privacy regulations. The data export functionality (and associated data import functionality) also allows schools to send data to districts for the purposes of creating district-level reports, and allows districts to send data to states for the same purpose.

### B.7 Platform Features Considered But NOT Included

Based on key informant recommendations and requests and AIR staff experience in administering school climate and other school-based surveys of students, parents, and staff, several design features were considered for integration into the SCLS platform. These platform features were considered advantageous but could not be implemented because they conflicted with platform goals described above or were outside of the scope of SCLS objective. Below we briefly describe these features, their potential advantages, and why they were not directly integrated into the SCLS platform.

#### B.7.1 Preloading of Respondent Data

Education agencies may desire a survey platform that allows respondent data to be preloaded into the platform rather than requiring respondents to enter the information. However, such a design feature could not be implemented for three reasons. First, Risk to the confidentiality of responses would increase if SCLS responses were linked to identifiable records within the platform. Second, it gives the impression that the SCLS surveys and platform can be used to create a federal database of identifiable student information, which if implemented, would violate federal regulations. Third, accommodating preloaded data to be used during survey administration would require significant custom programming—e.g., not all schools use the same staff role titles, so it would be difficult to

ensure that all preloaded data would route staff to the appropriate role-based survey questions—that is outside of the scope of the SCLS objective.

### B.7.2 Reporting of Data by Detailed Respondent Subgroups

Enabling education agencies to break down the survey results by detailed respondent characteristics (such as gender, grade, race/ethnicity, gifted and talented status, special education status, and English language learner status) would allow agencies to assess perceptions of school climate in more detail and potentially create more targeted programs and policies to improve school climate. However, the potential for a breach in respondent confidentiality and data security outweighs the potential benefit. Additionally, statuses such as gifted and talented, special education, and English language learner may not be reliably reported by respondents. As such, the platform is not designed to allow agencies to view survey results by limited demographic characteristics, such as grade, gender, and race/ethnicity for student surveys. In order to maintain respondent confidentiality and data security, only a limited breakdown of results by respondent characteristics are allowed, and appropriate ED Data Review Board (DRB) standards have been applied to resultant reports generated from the SCLS platform. If education agencies wish to perform more detailed subgroup student reporting, respondent-level data can be exported from the platform for this purpose, leaving the education agency responsible for ensuring proper confidentiality protections.

### B.7.3 Customization of Survey Content

Allowing end users to customize their survey administrations by adding, modifying, or deleting questions may be an attractive option to obtain maximum utility from the SCLS platform and surveys. However, modification or deletion of survey content could potentially affect the psychometric properties of the SCLS scales, thereby posing significant risks to the comparability of results across education agencies and to national benchmarks. Specifically, the questions to be offered in the SCLS are intended to produce psychometrically validated scales, and it is crucial for the statistical validity of those scales that all questions remain in the survey. In the final version of the released platform after the benchmark study, the platform will allow education agencies to add questions, in the same multiple choice form, to the end of the surveys. The platform will not provide any reporting on these additional questions. However, education agencies can export the data files and perform additional analysis and reporting outside of the system.

# Appendix C

## General Communication Language (e.g., District Communication About Pilot SCLS to Schools)

*<DATE>*

*<Coordinator name>*
*<school name>*
*<address>*
*<city, state zip>*

Dear *<administrator>*

*<Agency>* is supporting the pilot testing of the School Climate Surveys (SCLS) platform, a suite of four surveys (one each for parents, students, instructional staff, and noninstructional staff) that can be administered to an individual school or a district. The SCLS platform, developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) on behalf of the U.S. Department of Education (ED), will be freely available to education agencies, with no licensing or other required costs associated with acquiring, installing, configuring, or administering the survey on existing network systems. Following the pilot test, NCES/ED also plans to conduct a national benchmark study to provide data for comparisons between school climate scores at the local and national levels.

School climate has been recognized as a potential lever in education policy since at least 1908, described by Perry (1908) in his book *The Management of a City School* as the "esprit de corps." School climate encompasses health and safety, interpersonal relationships, instructional resources, and facilities. Positive school climates are conducive to learning, whereas negative school climates are a barrier. Our purpose in administering the SCLS is to provide *<Education Agency>* with reliable, actionable data that will afford us the levers needed to foster positive school climate*(s)*.

Participation in this study is voluntary; however, we encourage your *<Education Agency's>* participation in this phase of SCLS. The participation of your *<Education Agency>* in this data collection is crucial for the development of valid survey questions that will accurately measure school climate and to develop a no-cost, user-friendly, high-functioning tool that schools, school districts, and states throughout the United States can use at their discretion to administer the suite of SCLS surveys.

If you have questions about the SCLS or your *<Education Agency/s>* participation in this pilot test, please feel free to call me at *<Coordinator Phone Number>* or send an email to <Coordinator Email>.

Thank you for your support of this initiative.

Sincerely,

*<Coordinator Name>*
*<Coordinator Contact Information>*

# Appendix D
## One-Page Flyer

The one-page SCLS flyer is ideal for recruiting respondents and answering inquiries about SCLS from interested parties.

SCLS

# School Climate Surveys Platform

## What is the SCLS Platform?

In early 2013, the Department of Education (ED) announced that a high priority would be placed on efforts to help the nation's schools "create safer and more nurturing school climates." One component of this effort is the development of a school climate measurement platform to provide valid and reliable measures of school climate for local education agencies including schools, school districts, and states. The Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS) provided funds to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) to develop this platform for release in the fall of 2015.

The platform will be **downloadable free of charge** and provide user-friendly school climate reports. Education agencies administering the survey will be able store the data locally on their own data systems. The platform will include surveys for middle and high school students, their parents, teachers/instructional staff, non-instructional staff and administrators. In 2016, NCES on behalf of ED will survey 500 schools to create nationally-representative school climate benchmark scores. The national benchmark scores will be added to the platform's reporting functionality to enable comparisons between local and national scores.

## Features of the Platform

The school climate platform will provide domain-level climate scores for local education agencies administering the surveys and each of the school climate topics. School administrators can examine these scores for the entire school and by grade level, race, or gender. Item-level statistics will be available at the school-level. Districts administering the survey will be able to produce reports to compare between schools and compare individual schools with the entire district. States administering the survey will be able to produce reports to compare between districts and compare individual districts with the entire state.

### Development Priorites

- ☑ Minimize disclosure risk
- ☑ Process data and provide survey results to the administering education agency
- ☑ Allow for the import and export of data such that schools can deliver data to districts or states, for the purposes of higher level reporting
- ☑ Allow for users to add user-created items
- ☑ The platform is being developed as license-free technology

## What's measured?

**Engagement**
- + Cultural and linguistic competence
- + Relationships
- + Participation

**Safety**
- + Emotional safety
- + Physical safety
- + Bullying/cyberbullying
- + Substance abuse
- + Emergency readiness/management

**Environment**
- + Physical environment
- + Instructional environment
- + Physical Health
- + Mental Health
- + Discipline

## Development Schedule

**July 2014**
Administer cognitive labs to test survey content and platform usability.

**March/April 2015**
Administer pilot test of 25 middle schools and 25 high schools to test items, develop scales for topics and domains, and refine platform technology.

**September 2015**
School climate platform available for education agency download.

**March 2016**
National benchmark data collection of 250 middle schools and 250 high schools.

**September 2016**
A revised school climate platform with national benchmark reporting is available for education agency download.

If you are interested in knowing more about the SCLS Platform or the SCLS pilot study, please email schoolclimate@air.org or leave a message at 1-844-849-5252 (toll free).
https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scls

ies NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Institute of Education Sciences

# Appendix E

## Confidentiality Pledge for Survey Proctors (sample)

I hereby certify that I have carefully read and will cooperate fully with the SCLS procedures on confidentiality. I will keep completely confidential all information arising from surveys concerning individual respondents to which I may gain access. I will not discuss, disclose, disseminate, or provide access to survey data and identifiers. I give my personal pledge that I shall abide by this assurance of confidentiality.

My signature below indicates I have read and agree to the Pledge of Confidentiality

*Signature:* _____ *Date:* _____

*Printed Name:* _____

# Appendix F

## Proctor Script for in-School Student Survey (sample)

Good morning/afternoon.

You're here because the [school/district] wants to conduct a survey to hear your opinions about your school. The survey will ask your opinion on questions ranging from student engagement, to bullying, to the conditions of the school building itself. Your answers will be used to improve the school experience for you, your fellow students, and your teachers. Your teachers, and in fact all the staff in your school, will also have the chance to voice their opinions on similar surveys. Even your parents will receive a survey and the chance to have their say.

Your [school/district] wants to hear from everyone, so your participation is very important. But it's also voluntary. You do not have to take the survey and you can skip any question you don't want to answer.

Please answer the questions as best you can. If you are unsure about the meaning of a survey question, do your best to answer it on your own. In order to maintain privacy, I will not be able to help you interpret the meaning of questions. Similarly, you should not ask other students or look at their responses.

When you have finished the survey, please sit quietly and do not disturb your fellow students.

Now, take the username in front of you, use it to log into the survey, but do not begin the survey until instructed. Once I have made sure everyone has successfully logged in and written down the PIN displayed on the page, I will move to a part of the room where I cannot see anyone's answers, and at that time I will instruct you to begin.

…

Now that everyone has reached the PIN page, please begin.

# Appendix G
## Consent Forms (sample)

Please refer to your state's and locality's informed consent laws in deciding which consent form to use.

Appendix G.1 – Parent Consent Form I (Opt in NOT Required)
Appendix G.2 – Parent Consent Form II (Opt in Required)

## Appendix G.1

### Parent Consent Form I (Opt in NOT Required)

**[NOTE: While the italicized text may be modified to suit the needs of each school or district, the non-italicized text should be kept consistent across all pilot study sites.]**

Dear parent/guardian:

*<SCHOOL NAME> is participating in a pilot test of a voluntary survey about school climate. The survey will be administered to students during regular school hours during the week of <WEEK OF ADMINISTRATION>. It will ask students about their perceptions surrounding topics such as student engagement, school environment, and school safety.*

To analyze and refine the questionnaires, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will receive individual-level responses from participating schools and districts but without the names or other direct personal identifiers of the respondents. All information received by NCES that in any way relates to or describes identifiable characteristics of individuals is protected from disclosure by federal statute; it may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) of 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). If you want additional information about NCES's use of your child's data please contact *<NCES CONTACT INFO>*.

The data your child provides may also be used by their school and district to better understand the current climate in their school. The only people who will see your child's answers to individual questions are authorized personnel at their school and district (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Your child's answers will be combined with the answers of other students at their school and district and used to create records about the climate of their school. These reports will not identify any person or their responses.

<USE IF LINKING STUDENT RECORDS>:
Although these reports will not identify any person or their responses, your child's data may be combined with other data about your child to help their school to improve the climate of their school.

*If you do not want your child to participate in this survey, please complete, sign, and postmark this letter using the enclosed postage paid envelope by <DEADLINE DATE>. If you sign and postmark this letter by <DEADLINE DATE>, this means your child will not participate in the survey and will be asked to report to a designated place in the school (for example, the library) while the survey is administered.*

*If you have any questions about this study or about your child's participation or would like to see a copy of the student survey, please contact <ADMINISTRATOR NAME> at <ADMINISTRATOR NUMBER>. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study, please contact <SCHOOL CONTACT INFO>.*

*I understand that completing and signing the form below and returning this letter, my child will not be allowed to take the School Climate Survey.*

*Parent/Guardian Signature:*_____ *Date:* _____

*Student Signature:* _____ *Date:*_____

*Student Printed Name:* _____ *Date of birth:* _____

*If you agree to allow your child to take the survey, you do not have to sign or send back anything.*

*Sincerely,*

*<ADMINISTRATOR NAME>*

## Appendix G.2

### Parent Consent Form II (Opt in Required)

**[NOTE: While the italicized text may be modified to suit the needs of each school or district, the non-italicized text should be kept consistent across all pilot study sites.]**

Dear parent/guardian:

*<SCHOOL NAME> is participating in a pilot test of a voluntary survey about school climate. The survey will be administered to students during regular school hours during the week of <WEEK OF ADMINISTRATION>. It will ask students about their perceptions surrounding topics such as student engagement, school environment, and school safety.*

To analyze and refine the questionnaires, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will receive individual-level responses from participating schools and districts but without the names or other direct personal identifiers of the respondents. All information received by NCES that in any way relates to or describes identifiable characteristics of individuals is protected from disclosure by federal statute; it may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (Education Sciences Reform Act (ESRA) of 2002, 20 U.S.C., § 9573). If you want additional information about NCES's use of your child's data please contact *<NCES CONTACT INFO>*.

The data your child provides may also be used by their school and district to better understand the current climate in their school. The only people who will see your child's answers to individual questions are authorized personnel at their school and district (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99). Your child's answers will be combined with the answers of other students at their school and district and used to create records about the climate of their school. These reports will not identify any person or their responses.

<USE IF LINKING STUDENT RECORDS>:
Although these reports will not identify any person or their responses, your child's data may be combined with other data about your child to help their school to improve the climate of their school.

*If you agree to allow your child to participate in this survey, please complete, sign, and postmark this letter using the enclosed postage paid envelope by <DEADLINE DATE>. If you sign and postmark this letter by <DEADLINE DATE>, this means your child will participate in the survey and will be asked to report to a designated place in the school (for example, the computer lab) where the survey is administered.*

*If you have any questions about this study or about your child's participation or would like to see a copy of the student survey, please contact <ADMINISTRATOR NAME> at <ADMINISTRATOR NUMBER>. If you have any questions about your child's rights as a participant in this study, please contact <SCHOOL CONTACT INFO>.*

*I understand that completing and signing the form below and returning this letter, my child will be allowed to take the School Climate Survey.*

*Parent/Guardian Signature:*_____ *Date:* _____

*Student Signature:* _____ *Date:*_____

*Student Printed Name:* _____ *Date of birth:* _____

*If you do not want your child to take the survey, you do not have to sign or send back anything.*

*Sincerely,*

*<ADMINISTRATOR NAME>*