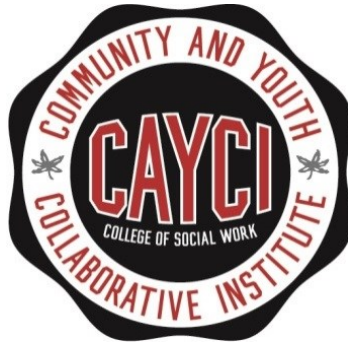


Community and Youth Collaborative Institute  
School Experience Surveys

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**Technical Report: Student Safety**  
Teacher/Staff Version

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**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

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## **STUDENT SAFETY**

Teacher/Staff Version

### **I. Definition of Construct**

The *Student Safety* scale measures teachers'/staff's perceptions of their students' personal safety at home, at school, and in their communities.

### **II. Relevance for Practice**

Safety is an important component for student success. Having a safe environment has been shown to be related to positive youth development among students (Brookover, 1978; Duke, 2002; Farmer, 1999; Skiba, 2005).

### **III. Scale Description and Instructions**

#### *A. Items*

1. My students feel safe at home.
2. My students feel safe in their community.
3. My students feel safe at school.

#### *B. Response Options*

Response options for each item include the following:

- 1 = Almost never
- 2 = Sometimes
- 3 = Half of the Time
- 4 = Frequently
- 5 = Almost always
- \* "Do Not Know"

#### *C. Instructions for Respondents*

We are interested in learning about your perceptions of how safe your students are in different environments. For each of the following statements, please fill in the ONE circle that best represents your answer.

#### *D. Instructions for Scale Administrators*

Surveys can be self-administered or administered to teachers/staff in person or online. Explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their perceptions about their students, school, and community. They should select one answer per request, and make a choice based on the answer that best reflects how they feel. They may submit the survey when they have completed it.

If administered in person, look through the finished surveys to make sure that teachers/staff didn't miss any items or questions. Please remember that they do not have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible, reminding them their answers will help the school know how to best support its students and personnel.

### **IV. Scoring Procedures**

An average of the response scores from the 3 items should be calculated and used as an indicator of student safety, with higher scores indicating that school staff perceive that their students feel safer.

## V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

### A. Description of Sample

Participants used to explore the psychometric properties of the scale included 534 school staff members from various elementary schools (52.6%), middle schools/junior high school (17.4%) and high school (30.0%) around the state of Ohio. The majority of participants indicated at least part of their duties at the school included teaching (86.0%), with the remainder reporting non-teaching duties (e.g., support staff, administration). The amount of experience working at the school ranged from 1-10 (55.2%) or 11-20 (25.8%) to over 20 years (18.9%). Staff members (72.8% female) almost all identified themselves as Caucasian (95.1% %). The participants varied in age with 12.2% reporting they were under 30 years of age, 41.9% indicated they were 30-44, and 45.9% were 45 years or older. Data on these staff members were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Some data were collected using an on-line instrument, whereas others were collected via paper/pencil survey. School administrators informed teachers and school staff of the survey and distributed the surveys in a meeting or through mailboxes or provided the staff with a link to the online survey. All completed paper/pencil surveys were returned to a specified location in the building or to a person who was identified as the lead. All versions of the survey were anonymous.

The final sample described above included only those with no missing data on the scale and thus omitted 202 staff members who responded to one or more of the items with "Do Not Know." While only 5.2% the staff members selected the "Do Not Know" response option for the item "My students feel safe at school," 25.8% of the staff reported not knowing the students' feeling of safety at home and 21.5% reported not knowing how the students felt in their communities.

### B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	$\alpha$
Full Sample ( $N = 534$ )	4.05	.89	2.00-5.00	.88
Gender				
Males ( $n = 114$ )	3.90	.87	2.00-5.00	.87
Females ( $n = 389$ )	4.10	.90	2.00-5.00	.87
Age				
Less than 30 years ( $n = 65$ )	3.92	.88	2.00-5.00	.87
30-44 years ( $n = 224$ )	4.07	.86	2.00-5.00	.83
45 years and above ( $n = 245$ )	4.06	.96	2.00-5.00	.91
Amount of Experience at the School				
1-10 years ( $n = 295$ )	3.94	.91	2.00-5.00	.86
11-20 years ( $n = 138$ )	4.17	.90	2.00-5.00	.88
More than 20 years ( $n = 101$ )	4.20	.88	2.00-5.00	.91
Role as Staff Member				
Teaching ( $n = 459$ )	4.05	.89	2.00-5.00	.87
Non-Teaching (e.g., support staff, administrators) ( $n = 75$ )	4.06	1.01	2.00-5.00	.91
School Level				
Elementary ( $n = 281$ )	4.16	.91	2.00-5.00	.86
Middle School/Junior High ( $n = 93$ )	3.91	.94	2.00-5.00	.88
High School ( $n = 160$ )	3.93	.86	2.00-5.00	.89

Notes. Group specific data omits staff who did not indicate their status. Group comparisons were significant ( $p < .05$ ), with the exception of age and amount of experience at the school. The effect sizes ( $\eta^2$ ) indicated that group membership accounted for 1.7% or less of the variance in the scores.

### C. Maximum Value Percentages and Classification of Scores

Percentages		Classification of Scores		
Maximum Value	½ SD	Excelling	Emerging	Needs Improvement
81.0%	8.9%	> 90	90 - 72	<72

*Note. The max value percentages reflect the scale mean divided by the number of response options in the scale. This value allows the subscale to be compared with other measured constructs measured in the CAYCI surveys, thereby providing relative information regarding the extent to which staffs' experiences are favorable across constructs. The classification of scores provides ranges of values based on the maximum value percentage plus or minus ½ SD percentage. Based on these cut points, schools may determine where they stand on staffs' perceptions of students' safety relative to normed data.*

### D. Relationships between Student Safety score and other Staff Perception Constructs

Construct <sup>a</sup>	r =
Student Academic Motivation	.513
Student School Connectedness	.456
Student Academic Press	.366
Student Internalizing Behaviors	.540
Student Psychological Well-Being	.661
Student Externalizing Behaviors	.423
Social Skills	.672
Support for Students' Basic Needs	.632
Families and Caregivers' Support for of Learning	.573
Family History	.430
Family Support for Prosocial Activities	.435
Services and Supports	.181
Community Supports for Positive Youth Development	.289
Learning Supports	.298
Student Physical Activity and Nutrition	.529

*Notes. <sup>a</sup> Average score on the respective subscale scores from the CAYCI surveys (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2013). All relationships are significant ( $p < .01$ ).*

### E. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.71 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 3 items loaded on a single latent Academic Press factor. The factor variance was freely estimated, as was the uniqueness for each item. No covariances between uniquenesses were modeled. The data were input using the asymptotic covariance matrix.

Given this model was just identified, the overall fit of the model to the data was perfect, S-B  $\chi^2 = 0$ ,  $df = 0$ ,  $p = 1.00$ . The table on the next page presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .73.

Item	Loading	Uniqueness
My students feel safe at home	.89	.21
My students feel safe in their community	.99	.02
My students feel safe at school	.64	.59

## VII. Past and Future Scale Development

An initial version of the Student Safety scale included 1 additional item: “My students have their basic needs meet (i.e., food, shelter, etc.). Results from preliminary analyses indicated that this item did not fit well with the other scale items. Thus, the current recommendation is to use the 3-item version of the measure as described in this report. Future scale development work should involve testing the psychometric properties of the scale with a larger sample of non-teaching staff (e.g., school administrators, support staff). Further, it may be worth considering modifying items and/or response format to increase the variability in the scores and potentially adding additional items. Additional scale work is also needed to validate the Spanish version of this scale.

## VII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the Student Safety scale. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about students’ feelings of safety as perceived by teachers /staff. This information could then be used to further explore the relationship between safety and student’s positive youth development trajectories.

## VIII. References

- Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Initiative School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.
- Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2012). The development of the Perceived School Experiences Scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 2(2)*, 186-194.
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- Duke, D. L. (2002). *Creating safe schools for all children*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
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- Hu, L. & Bentler, P. M. (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling, 6*, 1-55.
- Skiba, R. (2005). Beyond guns, drugs, and gangs: The structure of student perceptions of school safety. *Journal of School Violence, 3(2/3)*, 149-171

## IX. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the scale for program evaluation or research purposes, we recommend using the following citation:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Community Surveys: Teacher/School Staff Student Safety Scale. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Institute Surveys, then the following citation would be appropriate to cover all scales:

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A. J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Community Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.