Community and Youth Collaborative Institute
School Experience Surveys

Technical Report: Support for Learning
Middle/High School Student Version

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SUPPORT FOR LEARNING
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I. Definition of Construct
The *Support for Learning* scale assesses students' experiences of the support their family and school staff provide for their learning and social-emotional development.

II. Relevance for Practice
Research has shown that when students experience support for learning from their schools and family, these experiences help to promote positive youth development as well as increase students' academic success (Reeve & Hyungshim, 2006; Reeve et al., 2004; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wentzel, 1998). By supporting students' autonomy, teachers can better engage their students in classroom content (Reeve et al., 2004) and motivate higher levels of academic success (Reeve & Hyungshim, 2006). Student motivation also is enhanced by supportive student-teacher relationships (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wentzel, 1998).

III. Scale Description and Instructions
A. Items
1. When I have a problem, I get help from my family.
2. When I have a problem, I get help from my teacher.
3. I would go to my teacher for help if I needed it.
4. My teacher(s) would notice if I was not in school.

B. Response Options
Response options for each item include the following:
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neither Disagree or Agree
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree

C. Instructions for Respondents
These questions ask you about the support for learning you receive from adults. For each of the following statements, please fill in ONE circle that best represents your answer.

D. Instructions for Scale Administers
For complete instructions on how to administer the survey, reference the "Student Survey Directions" that are printed within the survey itself. Once each student has a survey, explain that the purpose of the survey is to learn more about their experiences at school. They should mark one answer per statement, selecting the choice that best reflects how they feel.

As students finish, look thoroughly through the surveys to make sure that they didn't miss any items or questions. Please remember that students do NOT have to answer every question, but do encourage them to complete as much of the survey as possible. Remind students that their answers will help the school know how to best support them.

IV. Scoring Procedures

An average of the response scores from the 4 items should be calculated and used as an indicator support for learning, with higher scores reflecting greater levels of experienced support.

V. Psychometric Properties of the Scale

A. Description of Sample

Participants used to test the psychometric properties of the scale included 5211 middle school (6-8th grade; 44.8%) and high school (9-12th grade; 55.2%) students from around the state of Ohio. The participants included 2636 males (51.4%) and 2489 (48.6%) females. The majority of students identified themselves as White/Non-Hispanic (86.3%), Mixed/Multi-Racial (8.5%), African American (3.3%), Latino/Latina (0.9%), or Asian (0.9%), and 48.4% indicated they received a free or reduced lunch. Data on these students were collected as part of a needs assessment within each school's improvement planning process. Some data were collected using the online instrument, whereas others were collected via paper/pencil survey.

B. Basic Descriptive Statistics and Relevant Group Differences

Sample	Mean	SD	Range	α
Full Sample (*N* = 5211)	3.66	.83	1-5	.72
Gender				
Males (*n* = 2630)	3.60	.85	1-5	.72
Females (*n* = 2479)	3.71	.81	1-5	.71
Race/Ethnicity				
White/Non-Hispanic (*n* = 4434)	3.67	.82	1-5	.71
Other (*n* = 777)	3.59	.93	1-5	.76
School-Type				
Middle School (*n* = 2304)	3.73	.82	1-5	.70
High School (*n* = 2834)	3.60	.84	1-5	.72

Note. Group specific data omits students who did not indicate their status. All groups were significantly different (p<.05), however the effect sizes (η^2)for each comparison indicated that group membership accounted for less than 1% 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
73.1%	8.4%	81+	81-67	<67

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 students' 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 students' experiences of support for learning against normed data

D. Relationship between Support for Learning scores and other Student Perception Constructs

Construct	r =
Academic Motivation [a]	.56*
School Connectedness [a]	.59*
Academic Press [a]	.61*
Self-Reported Grades [b]	-.23*

*Notes. [a] Average scores on the respective subscale from the Perceived School Experience Scale (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2012). [b] Students responded to the question "On average what grades do you get in school?" with response options ranging from 1 (mostly A's) to 9 (mostly F's) (Anderson-Butcher, Amorose, Iachini, & Ball, 2012) * relationship significant (p<.01).*

E. Differences in Support for Learning scores across School Performance Designations

School Designation	Mean	SD
Academic Emergency		
Academic Watch		
Continuous Improvement		
Effective (*n* = 2016)	3.71	.84
Excellent (*n* = 2225)	3.63	.81
Excellence with Distinction		

Note. Designations were significantly different (p<.05), however the effect size (η^2) indicated that group membership accounted for less than 1% of the variance in the scores.

F. Factorial Validity

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducting using robust maximum likelihood estimation procedures in LISREL 8.71 (Scientific Software International, Inc., Chicago). The CFA model specified that the 4 items loaded on a single latent Support for Learning 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.

The overall fit of the model to the data was reasonably good based on commonly recommended cut off values for evaluating model fit (see Hu & Bentler, 1999), S-B χ^2 = 26.48, *df* = 2, *p* = .00; RMSEA = .049 (90% CI = .033-.066), SRMR = .05; CFI = 1.00, TLI = .99. The table below presents the completely standardized factor loadings and uniquenesses for each item. Squared multiple correlations averaged .43. The modification indices did not suggest any major areas of local strain.

Item	*Loading*	*Uniqueness*
When I have a problem, I get help from my family.	.46	.78
When I have a problem, I get help from my teacher.	.81	.34
I would go to my teacher for help if I needed it.	.80	.36
My teacher(s) would notice if I was not in school.	.44	.81

VII. Past and Future Scale Development

An initial version of the support for learning scale included 2 additional items: (1) "There is at least 1 adult in my school who knows me well," and (2) "There is at least 1 adult in my school who cares about me." Results from preliminary analyses indicated that these items did not fit well with the other scale items. Thus, the current recommendation is to use the 4-item version of the measure as described in this report. Future scale development work may consider revising items #1 ("When I have a problem, I get help from my family ") and #4 ("My teacher(s) would notice if I was not in school") given their relatively low factor loadings. Adding additional items to capture a broader range of supports for learning that occur within the school context may enhance the overall quality of the measure. Further scale work is also needed to validate the Spanish version of the scale.

VII. Summary

Overall, the results of the psychometric testing indicate initial support for the reliability and validity of the support for learning scale with middle and high school students. The use of this measure could provide valuable information about students' experiences of the support they receive for learning and how it helps promote positive youth development, as well as increased school success.

VIII. References

Anderson-Butcher, D., Amorose, A.J., Iachini, A., & Ball, A. (2013). Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience 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.

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.

Reeve, J., & Hyungshim, J. (2006). What teachers say and do to support students' autonomy during a learning activity. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 98(1), 209–218.

Reeve, J., Jang, H., Carrell, D., Jeon, S., & Barch, J. (2004). Enhancing students' engagement by increasing teachers' autonomy support. *Motivation and Emotion*, 28(2), 147–169.

Skinner, E.A., & Belmont, M.J. (1993). Motivation in the classroom: Reciprocal effects of teacher behavior and student engagement across the school year. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 85(4), 571–581.

Wentzel, K.R. (1998). Social relationships and motivation in middle school: The role of parents, teachers, and peers. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 90(2), 202–209.

IX. Recommended Citation of Scale

When using the Support for Learning 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 Experience Surveys.: Support for Learning Scale in Middle School and High School. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.

If this scale is used along with additional Community and Youth Collaborative Institute School Experience 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 Experience Surveys. Columbus, OH: College of Social Work, The Ohio State University.