

MI Student Voice Perception Survey – Student Engagement

Basis Policy Research

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Student engagement comprises intellectual urgency, emotional resonance, perspective bending, and sense of the aesthetic. The Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD) Teaching and Learning Department defines these four components as follows:

- Engagement is born of ***intellectual urgency***. Engaged children are willing to put time and considerable effort into learning more.
- Engagement is often born of an ***emotional resonance*** to ideas. Students are far more likely to remember the idea when a strong emotion is tied to a concept they're learning.
- Engagement is deepened by ***perspective bending***. Engaged children may be open to changing their thinking or beliefs when challenged and particularly relish the idea that their ideas can impact other learners.
- Engagement is often connected to a learner's ***sense of the aesthetic***. Engaged children can describe moments when they find something beautiful or extraordinary, captivating, hilarious, or unusually meaningful.

Students who are more motivated to learn and engaged in school have higher academic achievement and drop out at lower rates as compared to students who are less engaged (Klem & Connell, 2004). In light of the relationship between SE and academic achievement, creating a more positive, engaging experience is a promising approach to improving the academic performance of all learners (Appleton et al. 2008). Prior research has shown students are more engaged in schools with positive and welcoming environments (Konold et al., 2019).

Given the importance of engagement on students' academic performance and the influence of the school environment on engagement, the MI Student Voice survey includes both engagement and school environment-focused questions. The questions gauge students' academic engagement and perceptions of the school environment. Kent ISD, through a grant funded from the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, contracted with Basis Policy Research to analyze survey results and produce three research briefs covering topics of interest to Kent ISD. The current brief explores the relationship between the school environment and academic engagement.

About The Survey

This executive summary draws on data from the spring 2023 administration of the MI Student Voice perception survey. Fifty-five districts in Michigan participated in the survey. At the conclusion of the survey window, 33,233 students in grades 5 through 12 completed the survey. The sample is restricted to 26,990 students with complete survey data. The analyses included in this executive summary explore descriptive trends in the percentage of students responding to different response options and the predictive probability of different student subgroups reporting strong academic engagement.

Research Questions

- 1 How do Michigan students perceive their own academic engagement? How do these perceptions differ by gender, race/ethnicity, or grade-level?
- 2 To what extent does the school environment promote students' academic engagement?

Key Findings

Eighty percent of students report strong academic engagement.

- The predicted probability of Female students reporting strong engagement is 87 percent as compared to 82 percent for Male and non-binary or third gender students.
- Upper elementary students (90 percent) are more likely to report strong academic engaged as compared to middle (82 percent) and high school (77 percent) students.
- The predicted probability of White and Asian students reporting strong academic engagement is between 83 to 85 percent as compared to between 79 to 80 percent for Hispanic or Latinx (henceforth titled “Hispanic”), Black or African American (henceforth titled “Black”), and multiracial students.

Black, Hispanic, and multiracial students are less likely to report positive learning environments or feeling connected to peers.

- The predicted probability of White and Asian students reporting positive learning environments is between 76 to 79 percent as compared to between 66 to 71 percent for Black, Hispanic, or multiracial students.
- White (50 percent) and Asian (53 percent) students are more likely to report feeling connected to peers as compared to Black (40 percent), multiracial (41 percent), and Hispanic (45 percent) students.
- Non-binary or third gender students are less likely to report feeling connected to peers as compared to female students.
- Black students are less likely to report experiencing a fairer and more inclusive school environment as compared to White students.

Positive learning environments increase the likelihood of academic engagement.

- The predicted probability of reporting strong academic engagement is 89 percent for students who report learning environments as compared to 64 percent for students who report negative learning environments.
- Students reporting positive learning environments are almost five times as likely to report strong academic engagement.
- The predicted probability of reporting strong academic engagement is between 85 to 90 percent for students who report fairer and more inclusive environments and feeling more connected to peers; these students are between 2 to 2.8 times more likely to report strong academic engagement as compared to students who report less fair and inclusive environments and feeling less connected to peers.

Recommendations

- Develop and implement discipline policies that treat all students fairly.
- Prioritize strategies that promote academic engagement for high school students.
- Use the Kent ISD [Student Perception Planning Guide](#) when analyzing district- and school-level results.
- Implement district-/school-wide frameworks for building positive relationships with students.

Learning Environment. Items address teachers’ respect towards students, teachers’ encouragement of students, and adequacy of resources school provide.

Peer Connectedness. Items inquire about how connected students feel to other students and how well peers understand them.

Academic Engagement. Items address how efficiently students complete work, the amount of effort students put into learning the material, and whether students come prepared for class.

Fair and Inclusive Environment. The two items inquire about whether adults and students fairly treat people from different races, ethnicities, or cultures.

Historically Marginalized Groups. Includes students identifying as Black of African American, Hispanic or Latinx, or Multiracial.

Predicted probability. The likelihood or chance of a specific event or outcome occurring.

Upper Elementary. Students in grades five to six.

Middle School. Students in grades seven to eight.

High School. Students in grades 9 to 12.