

# California Healthy Kids Survey:

## 10 Key Indicators to Strengthen Community School Efforts

Community schools are working to understand and respond to the full range of student needs. The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS) – part of the broader California School Climate, Health, and Learning System (CaSCHLS) – provides student experience data that can directly inform and monitor those efforts.

This resource highlights 10 indicators of students' experiences that align directly with the California Community Schools Framework, including the Four Pillars, the Four Key Conditions for Learning, and the Four Cornerstone Commitments. Together, these indicators give community schools a practical way to monitor progress across their implementation.



Indicator	What it captures	How it connects to community schools
	<p><b>School Connectedness</b></p> <p>Students' sense of belonging, safety, fairness, and happiness at school</p>	<p>Captures data on the key condition of learning related to creating welcoming, safe, supportive, engaging environments where students feel like they belong. School connectedness is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strongly predictive of motivation, attendance, and academic success and</li> <li>• associated with lower levels of emotional distress, substance use, and delinquency</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Caring Relationships</b></p> <p>The extent to which students perceive that a teacher or other adult at school genuinely cares about them, notices when they are absent, and listens to them</p>	<p>Highlights the interpersonal foundation of trusting adult–youth relationships, which is crucial to developing supportive environmental conditions</p>
	<p><b>Promotion of Parental Involvement</b></p> <p>Students' perceptions of teachers communicating with parents about learning expectations, parents feeling welcome to participate at the school, and staff taking parent concerns seriously</p>	<p>Aligns with community school efforts on family and community engagement and strengths-based practices by reflecting whether schools foster welcoming two-way communication with families</p>
	<p><b>Meaningful Participation</b></p> <p>The degree to which students report engaging in interesting activities, helping decide class activities or rules, and doing things that make a difference at school</p>	<p>Reflects core qualities of community schools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• collaborative leadership and shared decision-making that includes students</li> <li>• productive instructional strategies</li> <li>• culturally relevant learning environments</li> </ul>
	<p><b>High Expectations</b></p> <p>Students' perceptions about having a teacher or other adult at school who consistently wants them to do their best and believes that they will be a success</p>	<p>Assesses educators' belief that every student has the capacity to succeed—which is essential to fostering powerful, culturally proficient, and relevant instruction</p>
	<p><b>Academic Motivation</b></p> <p>The degree to which students try hard on schoolwork because they are interested in it, work to understand new things, and try to improve</p>	<p>Provides insight on whether instructional strategies that support motivation, competence, and self-directed learning are working</p>
	<p><b>School Boredom</b></p> <p>The extent to which students find schoolwork uninteresting, limited in intrinsic value, and unengaging</p>	<p>Signals whether instruction may not be inspiring, inquiry-oriented, or connected to students' lives and communities</p>
	<p><b>School Is Worthless/Waste of Time</b></p> <p>The extent to which students have concluded that school is not worth their time—a step beyond school boredom into active rejection of schooling itself and the strongest early signal of risk for dropout and chronic disengagement</p>	<p>Dives deeper into perspectives from a key group that community schools are designed to reengage through restorative school climates, assets-based practice, and culturally proficient instruction</p>
	<p><b>Chronic Sadness/Hopelessness</b></p> <p>The degree to which students report persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness severe enough to keep them from some of their usual activities—a proxy for clinical depression</p>	<p>Illuminates student needs for mental health supports, a key element of providing robust integrated student supports</p>
	<p><b>Life Satisfaction</b></p> <p>Students' satisfaction with family life, friendships, school experience, themselves, and where they live—a measure of subjective well-being, capturing not the absence of distress but the presence of flourishing</p>	<p>Offers a holistic snapshot of whether the student and family support—a key aspect of community schools—is translating into students who are doing well, not just getting by, across multiple domains of their lives</p>