



**PANORAMA**  
EDUCATION

USER GUIDE  
**Panorama Well-Being Survey**



# ABOUT THIS SURVEY

## **WHAT IS WELL-BEING AND WHY DOES IT MATTER FOR STUDENTS?**

Based on the “disease model” of 20th century clinical psychology, well-being used to be thought of as the absence of risky behavior or mental illness. In the past two decades, however, the field of positive psychology has redefined well-being as the positive experiences, thoughts, and feelings that enable human prosperity and flourishing. At Panorama, we also approach student well-being from this perspective, with the goal of helping educators build student happiness instead of diagnosing student illness.

Although there are important objective components to well-being—such as sleep, exercise, and stable housing—our approach to well-being centers on student voice and experience. How are students interpreting their reality and experiencing their lives? Are their days mostly filled with moments of loneliness and anxiety, or with happiness and excitement? Do they feel safe and supported by a network of trusted friends, family, and adults at school?

Student well-being matters in and of itself, but is also an important predictor of varied outcomes, including educational achievement, economic prosperity, and healthy relationships. It is commonly valued, but not yet commonly measured in schools.

## **HOW CAN SCHOOLS MEASURE STUDENT WELL-BEING?**

By asking students to reflect on their well-being through surveys, schools and districts can gather actionable data to better

understand how to support students socially and emotionally. Measuring well-being can contribute to a “whole child” approach to education, signal to students (and their families) the importance of mental health, help focus limited counseling resources on students who most need them, and inform a community-wide response to the trauma of student suicide.

From a student perspective, measuring well-being can give students an opportunity to share their inner aspirations and struggles, and ultimately lead to interventions that improve something they value highly: their own happiness.

The Panorama Well-Being Survey exists as a set of three scales, or groups of survey questions, each focused on a single construct, or topic: Positive Feelings, Challenging Feelings, and Supportive Relationships. Each of these constructs is grounded in scholarly literature. For example, because pleasant and unpleasant emotions have separate evolutionary origins, brain systems, and behavioral correlates, we measure them in separate topics. Schools and districts can select the topics that align with their strategic priorities or add custom questions, although we recommend using the full survey.

In interpreting data about students’ well-being, we believe it is essential for educators to consider how situational or environmental forces shape student experience, the potentially productive role of challenging emotions, and the risks of unintentionally affirming problematic stereotypes.



For example, students experiencing high levels of loneliness or anger may be responding appropriately to challenging life. In neither case should we label those students as “lonely” or “angry,” or assume that they, as opposed to their circumstances, are responsible for their suffering.

### **WHO SHOULD USE THE PANORAMA WELL-BEING SURVEY?**

Panorama’s survey helps educators understand students’ positive and challenging feelings, as well as how supported students feel through their relationships with others.

The questions are applicable to all types of K-12 school settings—including public, independent, and charter schools—and to communities serving students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Panorama provides developmentally appropriate versions of the questions for students in grades 3-5 and students in grades 6-12.

### **SURVEY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

The Panorama Well-Being Survey was developed by the Panorama research team, led by Dr. Samuel Moulton. To develop the survey, we interviewed district leaders and educators from across the country, reviewed relevant scholarship and instrumentation, and followed best practices in the science of survey design (as summarized by Panorama’s Senior Research Adviser, Dr. Hunter Gehlbach, in [this peer-reviewed publication](#)). After designing an initial survey, we pilot-tested it in 100 schools, collecting initial data from over 25,000 students. Using these results and feedback from our

pilot partners, we refined the survey to maximize its psychometric qualities and practical utility. [This Reliability and Validity Report](#) details the survey instrument’s psychometric properties.

### **USING THE PANORAMA WELL-BEING SURVEY**

Schools and districts may use the Panorama Well-Being Survey on its own, or combine topics on this instrument with related topics from the [Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey](#), the [Panorama Student Survey](#), and the [Panorama Equity and Inclusion Survey](#), such as Social Awareness, Sense of Belonging, and School Safety.

At Panorama, we believe that all educators deserve access to the best tools available. We invite educators to use the Panorama Well-Being Survey free of charge. We only ask that you identify the survey as the “Panorama Well-Being Survey” created by Panorama Education so that others may find this resource as well.

To learn about partnering with Panorama for survey administration, reporting, and professional learning, please contact us at [contact@panoramaed.com](mailto:contact@panoramaed.com).

# ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM



**Dr. Samuel Moulton**, director of research at Panorama Education, has a passion for use-inspired research that informs educational practice and advances scholarly knowledge. Dr. Moulton wrote his doctoral dissertation on well-being and is an expert in positive psychology. At Panorama, he applies his expertise in educational psychology, research methodology, and statistics to projects that include survey scale development, SEL, multivariate and multilevel modeling, statistical inference, and data visualization.

Dr. Moulton holds B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees in psychology from Harvard University and has served as a research associate, lecturer, and Fellow in Harvard's Department of Psychology. Prior to joining Panorama, Dr. Moulton served as director of educational research and assessment for Harvard's president and provost.



**Dr. Hunter Gehlbach** is the senior research advisor at Panorama Education, as well as a professor and vice dean at the Johns Hopkins School of Education. He is an educational psychologist with an academic focus on helping social scientists and practitioners design better surveys and questionnaires.

Dr. Gehlbach is particularly interested in helping schools think about ways to use surveys to improve teacher and student outcomes. After graduating with a B.A. from Swarthmore College in psychology and education, Dr. Gehlbach taught high school social studies before returning to school for a M.Ed. in school counseling from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and a Ph.D. in educational psychology from Stanford.

# What the Survey Measures

## **POSITIVE FEELINGS P. 6**

How frequently students feel positive emotions.

*Example Question: During the past week, how often did you feel happy?*

## **CHALLENGING FEELINGS P. 7**

How frequently students feel challenging emotions.

*Example Question: During the past week, how often did you feel lonely?*

## **SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS P. 8**

How supported students feel through their relationships with friends, family, and adults at school.

*Example Question: Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?*

## **FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS P. 9**

Open-ended questions that may be of interest to many schools.

*Example Question: What can teachers or other adults at school do to better support you?*

## **BACKGROUND QUESTIONS P. 9**

Demographic questions about students that could be included in the survey and may be of interest to many schools.

*Example Question: What language do you mostly speak at home?*

## Positive Feelings

How frequently students feel positive emotions.

Grades 6-12

Question	Response Options					
<i>During the past week, how often did you feel _____ ?</i>						
<b>excited</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>happy</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>loved</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>safe</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>hopeful</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	

Grades 3-5

Question	Response Options					
<i>During the past week, how often did you feel _____ ?</i>						
<b>excited</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>happy</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>loved</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>safe</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	

## Challenging Feelings

How frequently students feel challenging emotions.

Grades 6-12

Question	Response Options					
<i>During the past week, how often did you feel _____ ?</i>						
<b>angry</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>lonely</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>sad</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>worried</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>frustrated</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	

Grades 3-5

Question	Response Options					
<i>During the past week, how often did you feel _____ ?</i>						
<b>mad</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>lonely</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>sad</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	
<b>worried</b>	Almost never	Once in a while	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always	

## Supportive Relationships

How supported students feel through their relationships with friends, family, and adults at school.

### Grades 6-12

Question	Response Options	
Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes
Do you have a family member or other adult outside of school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes
Do you have a friend from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes
Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can be completely yourself around?	No	Yes
Do you have a family member or other adult outside of school who you can be completely yourself around?	No	Yes
Do you have a friend from school who you can be completely yourself around?	No	Yes

### Grades 3-5

Question	Response Options	
Do you have a teacher or other adult from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes
Do you have a family member or other adult outside of school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes
Do you have a friend from school who you can count on to help you, no matter what?	No	Yes





## Additional Questions

### FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

Thinking about everything in your life right now, what makes you feel the happiest?

Thinking about everything in your life right now, what feels the hardest for you?

What can teachers or other adults at school do to better support you? *[Grades 6-12]*

What can teachers or other adults at school do to better help you? *[Grades 3-5]*

### BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

What is your gender?

What is your race or ethnicity?

What grade are you in?

What language do you mostly speak at home?



# PANORAMA

## EDUCATION

**Panorama Education** partners with K-12 schools and districts across the country to collect and analyze data about social-emotional learning, school climate, family engagement, and more. With research-backed surveys and a leading technology platform, Panorama helps educators act on data and improve student outcomes. Panorama supports more than 15 million students in 25,000 schools across 50 states, including those in the New York City Department of Education, Dallas Independent School District, Seattle Public Schools, and San Francisco Unified School District.

**Learn more about Panorama:**

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