MA Department of Education logo

**Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) survey**

**Grade 8**

DIRECTIONS

The MCAS questionnaire provides students with a voice on topics that are important to their education and learning environment.

* The first two questions on the questionnaire ask about your college and career plans.
* The remaining questions ask what it’s like to be a student in your school environment.

**School Environment Questions**

Students helped develop the questions about your school environment. There are **no right or wrong** **answers**. Your teachers and principal **will** **not see your answers**; your answers will be combined with those of your classmates. Your school will use these combined answers to better understand what school life is like for students.

When you read each statement, **think about the last 30 days in your school**. Please **answer honestly** so your school knows how you really feel about your school.

**Please ask your test administrator for help if you are not sure how to complete this questionnaire.**

1. What are your plans after high school?

A. attend a four-year college

B. attend a two-year college

C. join the military

D. work full‑time

E. other

F. I don’t know.

1. If you are **not** planning to attend a two- or four-year college, which of the following best describes your plans for future job training? (If you are planning to attend a two- or four-year college, skip this question.)

A. attend college sometime in the future for vocational training or credentialing

B. attend a post-secondary vocational school for more advanced training

C. on-the-job training

D. I do not plan to seek future job training.

E. I don’t know.

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|  | **VOCAL items begin:**  **Think of the last 30 days in school.** | **Always true** | **Mostly true** | **Mostly untrue** | **Never true** |
| 3. | Teachers support (help) students who come to class upset. | A | B | C | D |
| 4. | My schoolwork is challenging (hard) but not too difficult. | A | B | C | D |
| 5. | I have a choice in how I show my learning (e.g., write a paper, prepare a presentation, make a video). | A | B | C | D |
| 6. | My teachers believe that **all** students can do well in their learning. | A | B | C | D |
| 7. | Teachers are available when I need to talk with them. | A | B | C | D |
| 8. | Teachers give students a chance to explain their behavior when they do something wrong. | A | B | C | D |
| 9. | Students have spread rumors or lies about me **more than once** on social media. | A | B | C | D |
| 10. | Students respect one another. | A | B | C | D |
| 11. | Teachers **don’t** let students pick on other students in class or in the hallways. | A | B | C | D |
| 12. | My teachers are proud of me when I work hard in school. | A | B | C | D |
| 13. | In my school, groups of students tease or pick on one student. | A | B | C | D |
| 14. | In my classes, my teacher use students' interests to plan class activities. | A | B | C | D |

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|  | **Think of the last 30 days in school.** | **Always true** | **Mostly true** | **Mostly untrue** | **Never true** |
| 15. | If I need help with my emotions (feelings), **effective** help is available at my school. | A | B | C | D |
| 16. | Adults working at this school treat **all** students respectfully, regardless of a student's race, culture, family income, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. | A | B | C | D |
| 17. | Students help each other learn without having to be asked by the teacher. | A | B | C | D |
| 18. | Because I worry about my grades, it is hard for me to enjoy school. | A | B | C | D |
| 19. | If I tell a teacher or other adult at school that someone is being bullied, the teacher/adult will do something to help. | A | B | C | D |
| 20. | My textbooks or class materials include people and examples that reflect my race, cultural background and/or identity. | A | B | C | D |
| 21. | Students have a voice in deciding school rules. | A | B | C | D |
| 22. | Students will help other students if they are upset, even if they are not close friends. | A | B | C | D |
| 23. | My teachers use my ideas to help my classmates learn. | A | B | C | D |
| 24. | My teachers set high expectations for my work. | A | B | C | D |
| 25. | Students at school damage and/or steal other students' property. | A | B | C | D |

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|  | **Think of the last 30 days in school.** | **Always true** | **Mostly true** | **Mostly untrue** | **Never true** |
| 26. | Teachers, students, and the principal work together in our school to prevent (stop) bullying. | A | B | C | D |
| 27. | My teachers promote respect among students. | A | B | C | D |
| 28. | In my school, bigger students taunt or pick on smaller students. | A | B | C | D |
| 29. | I feel comfortable reaching out to teachers/counselors for emotional support if I need it. | A | B | C | D |
| 30. | Students from different backgrounds respect each other in our school, regardless of their race, culture, family income, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. | A | B | C | D |
| 31. | Students at school try to stop bullying when they see it happening. | A | B | C | D |
| 32. | My teachers support me even when my work is not my best. | A | B | C | D |
| 33. | Our school offers guidance to students on how to mediate (settle) conflicts (e.g., arguments, fights) by themselves. | A | B | C | D |
| 34. | My classmates behave the way my teachers want them to. | A | B | C | D |
| 35. | Students are open to having friends who come from different backgrounds (for example, friends from different races, cultures, family incomes, or religions, or friends of a different sex or sexual orientation). | A | B | C | D |

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|  | **Think of the last 30 days in school.** | **Always true** | **Mostly true** | **Mostly untrue** | **Never  true** |
| 36. | Adults at our school are respectful of student ideas even if the ideas expressed are different from their own. | A | B | C | D |
| 37. | I have seen students with weapons at our school. | A | B | C | D |
| 38. | I have been called names or made fun of by other students **more than once** in school. | A | B | C | D |
| 39. | My parents feel respected when they participate at our school (e.g., at parent-teacher conferences, open houses). | A | B | C | D |
| 40. | School staff are consistent when enforcing rules in school. | A | B | C | D |
| 41. | The things I am learning in school are relevant (important) to me. | A | B | C | D |
| 42. | My teachers will first try to help (guide) students who break class rules, instead of punishing them. | A | B | C | D |
| 43. | In my academic classes, students review each other’s work and provide advice on how to improve it. | A | B | C | D |
| 44. | In my classes, teachers use open-ended questions that make students think of many possible answers. | A | B | C | D |
| 45. | In my academic classes, I work with groups of students who are from different backgrounds (for example, different races, cultures, family incomes, or religions, or students of a different sex, or sexual orientation). | A | B | C | D |
| 46. | In at least two of my academic classes, students plan and work on projects that solve real-world problems. | A | B | C | D |
|  | **Think of the last 30 days in school.** | **Always true** | **Mostly true** | **Mostly untrue** | **Never  true** |
| 47. | In at least two of my academic classes, students are asked to teach a lesson or part of a lesson. | A | B | C | D |
| 48. | I can connect what I learn in one class to what I learn in other classes. | A | B | C | D |
| 49. | In my academic classes, students wrestle with problems that don't have an obvious answer. | A | B | C | D |
| 50. | Students are given multiple opportunities to show that they have mastered their classwork. | A | B | C | D |

Thank you for sharing your experiences and opinions through this student questionnaire. The information you provided can help inform your school’s efforts to create safe and supportive learning environments for all students. If you would like to speak with someone about the topics on this questionnaire, we encourage you to reach out to a family member and/or guidance counselor, teacher, principal, or other adult in the school.