

National Center for Education  
Statistics  
ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS)  
Additional Items Cognitive Interviews –  
Set 2 Round 2

Appendix S – Cognitive Interviews Round 1 Results  
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## ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS) – Round 1 – Cognitive Testing Results

### Instructional/non-instructional staff surveys

- Cognitive interviewing was conducted with 10 principals/assistant principals/vice principals, 5 teachers, and 5 school staff
- The following questions were tested:

#### Sexual Harassment Prevalence

1. The following types of problems occur often: students making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures to others who do not want to hear or see. *This could happen in school or outside of school, and it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media.*
2. The following types of problems occur often: students spreading sexual rumors or sharing sexual photos/videos of people who do not want them shared. *This could happen in school or outside of school, and it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media.*
3. The following types of problems occur often: students getting sent or shown sexual photos/videos that they do not want to see. *This could happen in school or outside of school, or it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media.*

#### Dating Violence Prevalence

4. The following types of problems occur often: students being threatened, hit, pushed, or kicked by someone they are dating. *This could happen in school or outside of school.*
5. The following types of problems occur often: students having someone they are dating try to control them (for example, keeping them from talking to friends or family, keeping track of them at all times). *This could happen in school or outside of school.*

#### Sexual Battery (and Incapacitated Sexual Battery) Prevalence – At School

6. The following types of problems occur at this school often: students having their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (e.g., forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they do not agree to it and do not want it to happen.
7. The following types of problems occur at this school often: students having their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (e.g., forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they cannot make a decision about whether they agree to it or want it to happen because they have been using drugs or alcohol.

#### Rape Prevalence – At School

8. The following types of problems occur at this school often: students being sexually penetrated (e.g., intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or other form of penetration) when they do not agree to it and do not want it to happen.

#### Sexual Battery and Rape Prevalence – Outside of School

9. Outside of school/school-sponsored events, the following types of problems occur often: students having their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (e.g., forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they do not agree to it and do not want it to happen.
10. Outside of school/school-sponsored events, the following types of problems occur often: students being sexually penetrated (e.g., intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, or other form of penetration) when they do not agree to it and do not want it to happen.

#### Perceptions of School Resources for Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Dating Violence

11. This school has effective resources for helping students who have experienced sexual contact (including forced kissing/touching of sexual body parts or sexual penetration such as intercourse, oral sex, or anal sex) that they did not agree to and did not want to happen.
  12. This school has effective resources for helping students who have had unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures made to them, sexual photos/videos sent to them, or sexual rumors or sexual photos/videos spread about them.
  13. This school has effective resources for helping students who have had someone they were dating threaten to hurt, hit, push, kick, or try to control them (e.g., keep them from talking to their friends or family, keeping track of them at all times).
- The draft interview questions generally worked well. However, two fairly substantive issues were identified through the cognitive interviewing:
    - For the prevalence questions, the use of the term “often” was confusing for respondents. Respondents felt the need for some quantification of this term and struggled with how to answer, given that they knew the behaviors occurred but did not know the exact frequency.
    - Some respondents felt that some of the questions were redundant and that it was difficult to distinguish what was different in the questions.
  - In response to these issues, several modifications were made:
    - We changed the prevalence questions to ask about the extent to which respondents feel that the particular behavior “is a problem at this school” (rather than that students “often” experience it). This format is used in some other survey questions included in the School Climate survey (e.g., “poor student attendance is a problem at this school”) and we feel that this will work better and eliminate the concern that often should be equated with guidelines for the specific frequency.
    - We streamlined the sexual harassment questions (which originally involved very nuanced distinctions) into two questions, one of which asks about the set of behaviors at school (originally split into 3 questions) and the other of which asks about the set of behaviors outside of school. We feel that this will also provide NCES and participating schools with more detailed information about sexual harassment taking place at school and outside of school (the original question did not distinguish between these settings).
    - We made additional question structure changes to clearly indicate when a question was asking about behaviors happening at school and those that were happening outside of school,
  - In addition to these fairly substantial modifications, we made a number of specific wording changes that were clearly indicated by the cognitive interviewing process (e.g., changed “sexual body parts” to “private body parts”, changed “outside of school/school-sponsored events” to “outside of school/outside of school-sponsored events”, removed “e-mail” from the sexual harassment questions).

## Student surveys

- Cognitive interviewing was conducted with 10 middle school students and 10 high school students
- The following questions were tested:
  - Sexual Harassment Prevalence
  - 1. Students at this school often make sexual comments, jokes, or gestures to others who do not want to hear or see them. *This could happen in school or outside of school and it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media.*
  - 2. Students often spread sexual rumors or share sexual photos/videos of people who do not want them shared. *This could happen in school or outside of school and it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media.*
  - 3. Students often get sent or shown sexual photos/videos that they do not want to see. *This could happen in school or outside of school and it could be in person or by text, e-mail, or social media*

## Sexual Battery (and incapacitated Sexual Battery) Prevalence – At School

4. At this school, students often have their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (for example, forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they do not agree to it and do not want it to happen. *The person who does it could be another student, a teacher, or someone else.*
5. At this school, students often have their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (e.g., forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they cannot make a decision about whether they agree to it or want it to happen because they have been using drugs or alcohol.

## Likelihood of Help-Seeking Behavior for Sexual Battery, Sexual Harassment, and Dating Violence

6. Students would go to a teacher or some other adult for help if they had their sexual body parts touched or grabbed (e.g., forced kissing, touching of their butt, crotch, or breasts) when they did not agree to it and did not want it to happen.
  7. Students would go to a teacher or some other adult for help if others were making sexual comments, jokes, or gestures to them, or sending them sexual photos/videos that they did not want to see, or spreading sexual rumors or sexual photos/videos about them to others.
  8. Students would go to a teacher or some other adult for help if someone they were dating threatened to hurt them, or hit, pushed, or kicked them.
  9. Students would go to a teacher or some other adult for help if someone they were dating tried to control them (for example, kept them from talking to their friends or family, or kept track of them at all times).
- The draft interview questions generally worked well. The most substantive issue was that some students felt that some of the questions were redundant and that it was difficult to distinguish what was different in the questions.
  - In response to this issue, and to be consistent with the changes made to the staff survey (regarding concerns with “often”), several modifications were made:
    - We changed the prevalence questions to ask about the extent to which respondents agree that the particular behavior happens (rather than how “often” it happens). We felt that the specific structure used in the staff survey (“...is a problem”) would be cognitively difficult for students but that removing “often” would be appropriate.
    - As with the staff survey, we streamlined the sexual harassment questions (which originally involved very nuanced distinctions) into two questions, one of which asks about the set of behaviors at school (originally split into 3 questions) and the other of which asks about the set of behaviors outside of school. We feel that this will also provide NCES and participating schools with more detailed information about sexual harassment taking place at school and outside of school (the original question did not distinguish between these settings).
    - We made additional question structure and formatting changes to clearly indicate when a question was asking about behaviors happening at school and those that were happening outside of school.
  - We also added a new question to the student survey about sexual battery experienced outside of school. This question was added because of feedback from instructional/noninstructional staff that students were in a much better position to report about what was happening outside of school than staff. We feel that this will provide NCES and participating schools with better information about where sexual battery is occurring.
  - In addition to these fairly substantial modifications, we made a number of specific wording changes that were clearly indicated by the cognitive interviewing process (e.g., changed “sexual body parts” to “private body parts”, changed “outside of school/school-sponsored events” to “outside of school/outside of school-sponsored events”, removed “e-mail” in the sexual harassment questions).