

## Assessing the Safety of the School Environment Using the *Framework for Safe and Successful Schools*

Implementing the [\*Framework for Safe and Successful Schools\*](#)<sup>1</sup> necessitates ongoing assessment of the current school environment. This tool will help assess the policies and practices represented in the framework, identify effective systems that need sustained effort, and components in need of change to better support school and student physical and psychological safety.

This assessment should be utilized collaboratively by the school safety team and school administration to guide efforts and identify needs within the unique context of each school community. Consider using this assessment and the attached result analysis and action planning tool in conjunction with the *Policy Recommendations for Implementation the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools*. Data from this assessment is not a valid method of comparing schools or measuring progress; it is intended *only* to guide discussion, planning, goal setting, and decision making.

### Definitions:

*Multitiered systems of support (MTSS)* represents a framework for a continuum of system-wide interventions of increasing intensity depending on need. MTSS emphasizes wellness promotion, prevention, and early intervention, helping to minimize redundancies and gaps in services.

*Physical safety* includes reasonable physical security measures such as locked doors, lighted hallways, and visitor check-in systems.

*Psychological safety* includes a positive school climate and trust among staff, students, and families where students feel connected and part of a close-knit and caring community, and where students are empowered to report any safety concerns.

*School-employed mental health professionals* are permanent, salaried professionals employed by the school district, such as school counselors, school psychologists, or school social workers.

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<sup>1</sup> Cowan, K. C., Vaillancourt, K., Rossen, E., & Pollitt, K. (2013). A framework for safe and successful schools [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

# Assessment of Comprehensive School Safety Practices

Prior to completing this assessment, we encourage review of the [Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#).

Please indicate the degree to which your school or district engages in each of the actions outlined below as they relate to the best practices of: (a) Integration of Services, (b) Implementation of Multitiered Systems of Support, (c) Access to School-Employed Mental Health Professionals, (d) Integration of School Safety and Crisis Preparedness Efforts, (e) Balance of Physical and Psychological Safety, and (f) Use of Effective Discipline Practices.

In completing the assessment, refer to the Best Practices for Creating Safe and Successful Schools section within the [Framework for Safe and Successful Schools](#) for more details on each item. *School teams can have team members complete the tool individually and then compare results, or they can complete it together as a team.* Consider any available data or evidence you may have that can inform responses to each item.

## Description of Rated Actions

**Willingness:** Openness to engage in efforts to address or improve practices

**Level of implementation:** Degree to which each item is embedded within current school-wide practices and policies

**Effectiveness:** Perception or evidence of positive outcomes associated with item

**Responsiveness:** Responsiveness to unique cultural and contextual factors of the school community

1 = Very Low

2 = Low

3 = Neutral/Split/Undecided

4 = High

5 = Very High

	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
<b>1a. Integration of services and initiatives (i.e., avoiding numerous stand-alone or redundant programs)</b>					
Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5
<b>1b. Collaboration among school staff</b>					
Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
<b>1c. Collaboration with families and community</b>					
Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

Notes:

**2. Integrated multitiered systems of support across academic, behavioral, social, emotional, physical, and mental health concerns**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

Notes:

**3a. All students have access to comprehensive school mental health supports and services**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**3b. School-employed mental health professionals (e.g., school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors) are integrally involved in the delivery of comprehensive school mental health services**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**3c. Established procedures for collaboration in school–community partnerships for school mental health services**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

Notes:

	Very Low	Low	Neutral	High	Very High
<b>4. Integrated plans and processes for school safety and crisis/emergency prevention preparedness, response, and recovery</b>					
Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**Notes:**

**5a. Reasonable efforts utilized to address physical safety**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**5b. Reasonable efforts utilized to address psychological safety**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**5c. Balance of physical and psychological safety efforts**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**Notes:**

**6. Use of effective positive school disciplinary practices**

Willingness	1	2	3	4	5
Level of implementation	1	2	3	4	5
Effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Responsiveness	1	2	3	4	5

**Notes:**

## Result Analysis and Action Planning

As a team, review the ratings on the Assessment of Practices to identify areas of strength that need sustained effort to maintain and areas for improvement or growth. Develop a plan of action using the worksheet below. Consider reasonable short and long term changes to policy and practice (See Policy Recommendations for Implementing the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools for suggestions).

1. Which areas, indicated by high ratings across all four descriptors (willingness, level of implementation, and responsiveness), are identified as specific areas of strength? What is needed to sustain those efforts?
2. Which areas, indicated by inconsistent ratings across all four descriptors, are identified as areas for possible improvement?
3. Which areas, indicated by low ratings across all four descriptors, are identified as areas that need to be addressed?

**Please cite as:** NASP (2017). Assessing the safety of school environments using a *framework for safe and successful schools* [Brief]. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Available online at [www.nasponline.org/schoolsafetyframework](http://www.nasponline.org/schoolsafetyframework).

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# Action Planning Guide

## Areas of Strength

Consider short and long term plans to sustain current efforts and progress.

Area of Strength	Short-Term Actions	Resources Needed	Long-Term Actions	Resources Needed

### Areas in Need of Improvement

Area of Strength	Short-Term Actions	Resources Needed	Long-Term Actions	Resources Needed