

Sense of Belonging Tool: Analysis

To effectively cultivate a culture of belonging, school leaders must gather data and take action based on what the data reveals. Administering this survey in the fall and again in the spring allows your team to monitor progress and adjust strategies throughout the school year. Use the following score breakdown to guide your interpretation of results and determine your next steps.

Scoring

- **28–35: Excellent**—Students feel highly accepted, supported, and included. Maintain and build on these practices.
- **21–27: Good**—Many students feel a sense of belonging, but continuous efforts are necessary to maintain and improve.
- **14–20: Moderate**—Some students feel a sense of belonging, but there is room for improvement.
- **0–13: Needs Improvement**—Students in this range might not feel adequately accepted, supported, or included. Action is needed to enhance their school experience.

Strategies by Score

The strategies correspond to your school's average score and guide your leadership team in translating insight into intentional action.

Scores Within 28–35 (Excellent)

Here are a few strategies geared toward your current score.

- **Celebrate and maintain success:** Congratulations on getting this score. You are leading an excellent school where the sense of belonging is flourishing. However, do not believe that you have “arrived” and that there aren’t areas for growth. Cherish and celebrate your existing practices and ensure they are continuously reinforced and maintained.
- **Establish peer mentorship programs:** Develop a peer mentorship program where student leaders connect with new or younger students. You can pair students with frequent academic, attendance, or disciplinary challenges with students who have successfully navigated your school community. This may further improve your sense of belonging culture.
- **Strive for continuous growth and development:** Even though you received a high score, there’s always room for growth. Consider areas of professional development your staff could benefit from, such as culturally responsive practices, relationship building, and maintaining high expectations.
- **Increase community engagement:** Strengthen relationships with parents and the community by organizing inclusive events, cultural celebrations, and community service projects that reflect the school’s diverse population.

Scores Within 21–27 (Good)

Here are a few strategies geared toward your current score.

- **Enhance support systems:** Strengthen your existing support systems by adding support for mental health, increasing access to counselors, providing additional academic support (including multitiered systems of support), and creating more opportunities for students to receive help and guidance.
- **Add an inclusive curriculum review:** Conduct a review of your school’s curricula and instructional practices to ensure they include diverse perspectives and materials that reflect the backgrounds of all students daily, not just on cultural holidays. Additionally, facilitate professional development to ensure all teachers are knowledgeable about culturally responsive teaching and implicit bias.
- **Develop staff collaboration and development:** Create intentional professional learning communities (PLCs) among your staff and regularly meet to share best practices, strategies, and resources for promoting a sense of belonging.
- **Amplify student voices:** Implement regular student feedback opportunities, such as student advisory groups, surveys, and focus groups, to continuously gather input on students’ sense of belonging and address any emerging issues promptly. Encourage more student leadership involvement in school decision-making processes, organize student-led initiatives, and create platforms for student voices to be heard and acted on.

Scores Within 14–20 (Moderate)

Here are a few strategies geared toward your current score.

- **Provide intentional professional development:** Establish a focused professional development series on cultural responsiveness, implicit bias, and inclusive teaching strategies to help staff better support all students.
- **Strengthen peer relationships:** Create programs and activities to strengthen student connections, such as team-building exercises and affinity and peer support groups.
- **Emphasize two-way communication channels:** Enhance communication channels between students, staff, parents, and the school community to ensure concerns are heard and addressed. Respond to concerns in a timely manner. Some examples of increasing your two-way communication may include hosting regular open forums, administering QR code survey forms, placing suggestion boxes throughout the school, delegating staff to attend community events as school representatives, and increasing access to your leadership team.
- **Show your commitment to inclusion:** Demonstrate your commitment to belonging by displaying inclusive messages, revising your school mission and vision statements, creating welcoming environments, and ensuring school policies reflect your dedication to diversity and equity.

Scores Within 0–13 (Needs Improvement)

Here are a few strategies geared toward your current score.

- **Overhaul the school climate:** Consider a school climate overhaul by revisiting and revising school policies, practices, and the physical environment to ensure they promote a sense of safety, respect, and inclusion for all students.
- **Utilize a comprehensive needs assessment:** Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the specific issues leading to low scores. Use this data to create a detailed action plan addressing these issues.
- **Implement emergency support initiatives:** To address urgent needs, implement immediate support initiatives, such as additional counseling services, peer support groups, and crisis intervention programs.
- **Monitor and adjust regularly:** Establish a system for regularly monitoring and adjusting strategies to ensure continuous improvement. Use frequent surveys, feedback sessions, and data analysis to track progress and make necessary changes.