MINNESOTA SAFE LEARNING SURVEY
Summary of Results
As one of 19 federally funded centers, the Wisconsin-Minnesota Comprehensive Center - Region 10 (WMCC10) provides high quality and intensive capacity-building services to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI), as well as local education agencies and organizations.

It is operated by three organizations: the University of Minnesota’s Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI), the University of Wisconsin-Madison’s Wisconsin Evaluation Collaborative (WEC), and Education Analytics (EA).

The three regionally-based organizations operating the WMCC10 add unique value to these capacity building services through their cross-state collaboration.
Context

• MN Safe Learning Survey (SLS) aims to capture experiences of educators, families, and students with the MN Department of Education’s Safe Learning Plan.

• Initial Safe Learning Survey (Winter) on first half of 2020-21 academic year
  • Conducted Feb 8-26, 2021
  • 23,000+ respondents

• Second Survey (Spring) on entire school year
  • Conducted May 5-June 18, 2021
  • 10,500+ respondents

• Final iteration (Fall) to be administered in October 2021
Winter Survey

Respondents (n=23,972)

- 49% Families
- 12% Students
- 39% Educators

Spring Survey

Respondents (n=10,535)

- 57% Families
- 16% Students
- 27% Educators
Survey Respondents by Region

Northwest Service Cooperative n=201 (8%)
Northwest Service Cooperative n=413 (8%)
Northwest Service Cooperative n=120 (8%)
Lakes Country Service Cooperative n=220 (9%)
Sourcewell n=79 (3%)
Sourcewell n=248 (5%)
Sourcewell n=138 (9%)
SWWC Service Cooperative n=191 (8%)
Resource Training & Solutions n=309 (12%)
Resource Training & Solutions n=374 (7%)
Resource Training & Solutions n=19 (1%)
South Central Service Cooperative n=78 (3%)
South Central Service Cooperative n=74 (1%)
South Central Service Cooperative n=1 (0%)
Southeast Service Cooperative n=327 (13%)
Southeast Service Cooperative n=1,082 (20%)
Southeast Service Cooperative n=375 (25%)
Metro ECSU n=994 (39%)
Metro ECSU n=2,112 (40%)
Metro ECSU n=608 (41%)

Other n=28 (1%)
Other n=24 (0%)
Other n=12 (1%)

CC NETWORK
Comprehensive Center Network
REGION 10
Wisconsin Minnesota
Survey themes

• Demographics
• Successes and Challenges
• Needed Supports
• Learning
• Connectedness
• Communication
• Moving Forward
Students learned

• Educators, families, and students continued to agree that some learning took place during the 2020-2021 school year.

• As grade levels increased, families felt that students were learning less.

• All groups continued to believe there was more learning taking place pre-COVID and that more learning occurred this school year than Spring 2020 when the state shifted entirely to distance learning.
To what extent do you believe your students are learning academic and social/emotional skills this year?

**Winter Survey**
- Academic skills (n=7,171):
  - Not learning at all: 1%
  - Learning a little: 15%
  - Learning some: 8%
  - Learning a lot: 61%
  - I don’t know: 2%
- Social and emotional skills (n=7,148):
  - Not learning at all: 2%
  - Learning a little: 22%
  - Learning some: 13%
  - Learning a lot: 44%
  - I don’t know: 2%

**Spring Survey**
- Academic skills (n=2,220):
  - Not learning at all: 1%
  - Learning a little: 10%
  - Learning some: 5%
  - Learning a lot: 50%
  - I don’t know: 2%
- Social and emotional skills (n=2,217):
  - Not learning at all: 2%
  - Learning a little: 32%
  - Learning some: 25%
  - Learning a lot: 19%
  - I don’t know: 2%
Key Finding 1

To what extent do you believe you / your students are learning this school year?

- Not learning at all
- Learning a little
- Learning some
- Learning a lot
- I don't know

Early Childhood Families (n=796):
- 1% Not learning at all
- 13% Learning a little
- 32% Learning some
- 54% Learning a lot
- 1% I don't know

Elementary Families (n=7,308):
- 1% Not learning at all
- 3% Learning a little
- 16% Learning some
- 40% Learning a lot
- 40% I don't know

Middle School Families (n=1,681):
- 1% Not learning at all
- 8% Learning a little
- 26% Learning some
- 43% Learning a lot
- 1% I don't know

High School Families (n=1,800):
- 1% Not learning at all
- 9% Learning a little
- 25% Learning some
- 41% Learning a lot
- 1% I don't know

Students (n=1,086):
- 1% Not learning at all
- 9% Learning a little
- 20% Learning some
- 40% Learning a lot
- 26% I don't know
How do you believe you / your students’ learning pre-COVID compares to learning this school year?

- More learning pre-COVID
- More learning this year
- Learning is about the same
- I don’t know
- Not applicable

Educators (n=2,211)
- 71% More learning pre-COVID
- 21% More learning this year
- 3% Learning is about the same
- 3% I don’t know
- 6% Not applicable

Early Childhood Families (n=294)
- 45% More learning pre-COVID
- 31% More learning this year
- 5% Learning is about the same
- 7% I don’t know
- 12% Not applicable

Elementary Families (n=2,308)
- 65% More learning pre-COVID
- 24% More learning this year
- 4% Learning is about the same
- 3% I don’t know
- 12% Not applicable

Middle School Families (n=1,691)
- 74% More learning pre-COVID
- 17% More learning this year
- 6% Learning is about the same
- 3% I don’t know
- 3% Not applicable

High School Families (n=1,801)
- 72% More learning pre-COVID
- 19% More learning this year
- 7% Learning is about the same
- 2% I don’t know
- 2% Not applicable

Students (n=1,067)
- 58% More learning pre-COVID
- 23% More learning this year
- 5% Learning is about the same
- 2% I don’t know
- 7% Not applicable
Support is needed for mental health

Teachers’ top challenges
  #1: Taking care of my own mental health
  #2: Supporting student mental health

Support Professionals’ top challenges
  #1: Taking care of my own mental health
  #2: Supporting student mental health

Administrators’ top challenges
  #1: Supporting student/staff mental health
Support is needed for mental health

Families’ top challenges
#3: Student(s) receiving mental health supports

Students’ top challenges
#3: Getting help with mental health
Student engagement: mixed results

Good News

• Teachers’ #1 reported success: engaging students in learning

• Support professionals reported relationship building and connection with students as their #1 success

• Students reported knowing where to be and when was their #3 success

• Families reported receiving support from teachers as their #1 success
Student engagement: mixed results

**Bad News**

- **Engaging students in learning** was also teachers’ #3 challenge
- Support professionals reported **getting in touch with students and families** as their #4 challenge
- Administrators’ #2 and #3 challenges were **ensuring attendance** and **ensuring that rigorous instruction was provided**
- Students #1 and #2 challenges were **keeping up with schoolwork** and **understanding schoolwork**
- Families’ #2 challenge was **receiving support from teachers**
KEY FINDING 4

Broad successes with technology, COVID-19 safety, connectedness, and communication

- Hardware and software were among least-commonly reported supports needed among all groups.
- Ensuring health and safety of themselves and others consistently fell among the top four successes for all groups.
- Most respondents reported strong connectedness between teachers and students, with these levels increasing compared to the Winter survey.
- Respondents reported that communication either “occasionally” or “almost always” met their needs.
Concerns moving forward

Mental health of students (1,376)
  Mental health of staff (1,354)
  Student engagement (1,151)
  Widening achievement gaps (1,043)
  Student social interactions/relationships (1,004)
  My student(s) being behind academically (968)

Student social interactions/relationships (3,510)
  My student(s) being behind academically (3,273)
  Mental health of students (3,217)
  Student engagement (2,795)
  Access to extracurricular activities (1,954)
  Mental health of staff (1,671)

Being behind academically (576)
  Being engaged in my classes / schoolwork (492)
  My own mental health (486)
  Social interactions / relationships (478)
  Access to extracurricular activities (326)
  COVID-19 safety (288)
## Concerns moving forward: mental health

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Access to extracurricular activities (1,954)
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Concerns moving forward: being behind academically

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Subgroup analysis: race

• Connectedness
  • Families of students of color, American Indian students, and multiracial students more often felt connected to teachers and support staff.
  • Students of color, American Indian students, and multiracial students more often felt less connected to their classmates.

• Learning
  • Students of color, American Indian students, and multiracial students and their families reported they were learning more this school year compared to pre-COVID.

• Racism and racial microaggressions
  • Students of color, American Indian students, multiracial students, and their families were concerned about racism and racial microaggressions.
Subgroup analysis: geography

• Technology
  • Families in greater MN faced more challenges with technology.

• Connectedness
  • Families in greater MN felt more connected to teachers and other families.
  • Students in greater MN felt more connected to their classmates.

• Student engagement
  • Families in greater MN with early childhood students were concerned about student engagement.

• Racism and racial microaggressions
  • Families and educators in the metro area were more concerned about racism and racial microaggressions.
Changes to schooling

• A random sample of educators, families, and students were asked: “Reflecting on your experiences from the past year, what do you think needs to change about schooling in the future?”

• Over 1,200 people responded (35% educators, 48% families, 18% students).

• Responses fell into the following categories:
  • Learning format, school infrastructure, COVID-19 protocols, academics, social and emotional wellbeing, educational systems, programming, student and family engagement, equity, appreciation, and other/misc.
Changes to schooling

• Key takeaways:
  • Educator comments focused on school infrastructure (primarily their own workload, but also issues such as school budgets, staffing, and resources) and a desire to return to in-person learning.
  • Family comments focused most on a desire to return to a full-time, in-person learning model and reducing or eliminating COVID-19 restrictions.
  • Student comments focused most on their grades, assignments, and workload as well as a desire to return to in-person learning.
Final report

Access the full report here: z.umn.edu/WMCCSLS2
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