

May 3, 2018

Dear parent, guardian, or other legally responsible adult:

We are excited to announce that the Iowa Department of Education has included Conditions for Learning as part of the plan under the new federal education law, Every Student Succeeds Act. All Iowa public school districts will use the Conditions for Learning Survey (Survey) to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment so that all Iowa students have optimum conditions for learning. Mason City Community School District has joined the state in this important work!

For the first time, we will measure conditions for learning by asking the real experts each year - students. **This is their chance to make their voice heard, and we intend to listen.** Together we will seek creative solutions that will support a world-class education that provides students with 21st century skills to succeed in the world. Studies have shown this work matters. Improving skills such as solving problems, working out conflict, and working with other people in a group has led to **double-digit increases** on achievement test scores, improved classroom behavior and improved attitudes.

Our work to improve safety, student engagement and the overall learning environment will have a lasting impact on the future. All public schools in Iowa will use the statewide online Survey to assess Conditions for Learning with all 5th - 12th graders in the Spring of 2018. We will ask your child to simply fill out a ***confidential [private]*** Survey. The Survey will focus on issues ranging from student safety, to positive student relationships, to school rules and how they are enforced. Mason City High School will receive timely data annually at the building level in the fall to support alignment of professional development with identified needs of students.

A high rate of participation by students in completing the Conditions for Learning Survey is important for obtaining the most complete school climate data for our school. Support from you in communicating to your students that this is their chance to be heard and to be part of the effort to improve conditions for learning at their school is critical.

Thank you for partnering with Mason City High School to improve conditions for learning throughout the state. Included in this packet is an overview of this opportunity, as well as:

- 1) An information summary about the student surveys
- 2) A written refusal form if you **do not** want your child/children to participate in completing the Survey

Please let us know if you have any questions and thank you again!

Sincerely,

DAVE VERSTEEG, SUPERINTENDENT and
DAN LONG, MASON CITY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. INFORMATION SUMMARY FOR STUDENT SURVEY

Between May 14 and May 30, 2018, if your child is in 5th - 12th grade, your child will be invited to complete a brief Conditions for Learning Survey online. **Participation in the Survey is nameless and strictly voluntary, and no student is required to fill out the survey.** The Survey will take about 15-20 minutes to complete.

Purpose of the survey

The purpose of the Survey is to obtain information about how students feel about the culture and climate of their school and teachers, as well as the safety of their school. The information collected will help the state, our schools, and local community improve the school. It is important to ask children to tell us what is good and working about their experience in school, and what needs to be improved, in their eyes. You may review Survey questions located in the office of your school.

Parental Rights:

- You have the right and the responsibility to be informed about what your child volunteers to participate in at school.
- You have the right to receive accurate information about the Conditions for Learning Survey in order for you to make good decisions for your family.

Confidentiality:

All information collected will be nameless. Students will not put names, birthdates, or any other way to identify them on the Survey, and all surveys will be private. Results are reported only in terms of the way various groups of people have responded. [In an effort to maintain anonymity, information on results for sub-groups (by race, gender, grade, etc) with fewer than ten people are omitted.]

Compensation:

There will be no payment or reward for students filling out the Survey.

Voluntary:

- All students in 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th grades will be invited to fill out the Conditions for Learning Survey. Students will have the right to refuse to answer any questions on the Survey. If a student decides they want to change their mind and not complete the Survey they may do so.
- If, as a parent or legally approved adult, you do not want your child/children to participate, you must send the school the *Refusal of Consent* form provided in this

letter, and your child/children will be provided with another activity during the Survey class period. There is no penalty for anyone who decides not to participate.

Risk:

There is no direct risk in filling out the Survey. Students may find some questions uncomfortable or difficult to answer. They may leave blank any question they do not wish to answer.

Benefits:

The data collected throughout the state will provide schools and communities with the information they need to provide programs that will support schools, communities and families in keeping their children safe and hopeful about their future.

Reviewing the Surveys:

Copies of the brief Conditions for Learning Survey are available to review at the school office. It must be reviewed there and not taken home.

Questions:

Questions regarding the brief Conditions for Learning Survey are welcome. If you have any questions or concerns please contact your school principal [Dan Long, dlong@masoncityschools.org or 641-421-4431] or consultant [Robin Galloway, rgal@iastate.edu and 641-430-1508 of the CE Consulting person assigned to the Area Education Agency (AEA) for our school district].

2. WRITTEN REFUSAL FORM

I have read the information Summary provided. I understand that my child/children’s participation in the Survey is *voluntary*. I also understand my right to review the surveys at the school office and District Administration Office from May 3 through May 30, 2018. I **do not** want my child/children listed below to complete the Conditions for Learning Survey. I understand that a different activity will be provided for them during the Survey time and that there is no penalty for my family members not completing the Survey. I understand that refusal of consent needs to be received by the district no later than **Friday, May 11, 2018 at 4:00 PM**. Please return this form with your child’s name and your name signed below to the **building principal** if you do not want your child to participate.

Names of child/children who will not participate in completing the brief Conditions for Learning Survey online in Spring 2018:

Child Name

Grade

Child Name

Grade

Child Name

Grade

Signature: Parent/guardian/legally responsible adult

Date